

OCCASIONAL PAPER □ 19

ISSUES IN HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD REHABILITATION

Eileen Badiuk, editor



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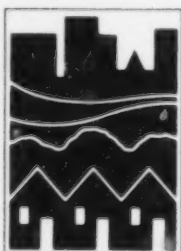
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Eileen Badiuk

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	iii
INTRODUCTION <i>Eileen Badiuk</i>	1
CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING: MORE THAN A SOLUTION TO THE HOUSING PROBLEM <i>J. Yves Lord</i>	3
INFILL HOUSING, FIVE YEARS LATER: CITY OF ST. JOHN'S <i>Binmatty Newell</i>	17
GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF HOUSING RENOVATION IN EDMONTON* <i>Peter J. Smith and Elizabeth Woodman</i>	29

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INTRODUCTION

During February 18-20, 1988, the Institute of Urban Studies hosted the Canadian Housing and Urban Studies Conference at the University of Winnipeg. Approximately 300 delegates from Canada, the United States, Western and Eastern Europe, Africa and New Zealand attended the three day long event that featured conference and special sessions, guided tours and receptions. Conference participants were exposed to a variety of innovative and varied insights on housing and urban issues as over 100 delegates presented papers from their areas of expertise. Topics of discussion included: the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; issues and concerns related to Northern communities; healthy cities; urban development; homelessness; neighbourhood rehabilitation; and housing options for particular groups such as senior citizens. The following three papers were presented at various sessions during this conference.

In the first paper, "Co-operative Housing: More than a Solution to the Housing Problem," J. Yves Lord, Operations Division Manager, Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada, discusses the co-operative housing movement in Canada for the period 1973 to the present. Lord identifies benefits derived from co-operative housing, noting in particular the manner in which co-operatives are able to serve as a vehicle for multi-faceted problem resolution. Examples are used to demonstrate the ability of housing co-operatives to provide affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households, and appropriate and suitable housing for households with special needs. Lord also notes that due to the self-management structure, housing co-operatives are able to foster a sense of community among residents, and provide an avenue for personal growth and development. Observations from a broader perspective suggest that the community-at-large may also benefit from co-operative housing, and credit is given to co-operatives for a small but important role in achieving social integration and neighbourhood revitalization and stabilization. Lord concludes the paper by outlining the problems and future prospects of housing co-operatives, and notes that despite several concerns, co-operative housing in Canada looks "to the future with considerable optimism."

Binmatty Newell of the City of St. John's Planning Department wrote and presented the second paper of the series. "Infill Housing, Five Years Later: The City of St. John's" examines infill housing development in St. John's, Newfoundland for the period 1982 to 1986. Newell notes that in 1982, the St. John's Municipal Council introduced amendments to zoning regulations to permit infill development in high density residential zones in and adjacent to downtown St. John's, for the purpose of encouraging residential redevelopment on vacant lots and facilitating the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. During the 1982 to 1986 period, 120 infill projects, including both new constructions and rehabilitations,

were completed through private, public and non-profit initiatives, adding a total of 256 dwelling units to the City. When assessing the impacts of infill development upon the neighbourhood, Newell notes that "although the use of the program gave the city, particularly the Downtown, a much needed face lift, it also exacerbated an existing parking problem and increased density to a level considered undesirable by many residents." The City of St. John's has since addressed these problems by modifying regulations to lower density levels, and placing stricter control on parking provisions.

In the final paper of the series, "Geographical Overview of Housing Renovation in Edmonton," Peter Smith and Elizabeth Woodman of the Department of Geography at the University of Alberta examine the characteristics of housing renovation activity in the City of Edmonton with a view to answering the question "Is there a distinctive spatial pattern to housing renovations in Edmonton and if so, why?". In this preliminary research paper, the analysis focuses upon assessing general characteristics of renovation activity, including the location and character of renovated buildings (type, age and quality of construction), and the number, type and value of completed renovations. The authors note that although private-market housing renovation activity is widespread throughout Edmonton, it has had no significant impact on the physical condition of most inner-city neighbourhoods. Rather, the most extensive renovation activity, and the greatest concentration of large-scale renovations (including enlargements and modernization activities), have occurred in the west end of the City—areas with long established reputations as select places to live. Smith and Woodman conclude, therefore, that housing renovation activity in Edmonton is not necessarily a function of gentrification.

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CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING: MORE THAN A SOLUTION TO THE HOUSING PROBLEM

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INTRODUCTION

The problems of modern settlements, ranging from the economic and physical decline of neighbourhoods to the breakdown of communities and the housing affordability problems facing low- and moderate-income households, have been the focus of many studies and government programmes over the past twenty-five years. Usually, the problems have been identified and treated in isolation from each other, through programmes with narrowly conceived goals.

Consistent with this pattern, Canadian housing policy has addressed economic, housing, income redistribution and community development goals separately. A succession of housing programmes has been directed towards supplying new housing, improving existing stock, ameliorating the affordability problems of low-income households and providing shelter for households with special needs. It has become apparent, however, that the mere satisfaction of physical shelter needs does not by itself create healthy communities. Given the mixed success of past programmes and the current emphasis in many Western nations on reduced public spending on social programmes, there is a growing recognition that new strategies which integrate solutions to housing and wider community problems are necessary.

This paper focuses on one such strategy: Canada's non-profit co-operative housing movement. The success of the movement in addressing wider social needs while providing affordable shelter stems from two characteristics common to all types of consumer co-operatives. First, co-operatives, by their nature, address social goals as well as the economic needs of their members. Second, co-operatives are a community-based response to problems—that is, they arise within a community experiencing a particular need, and are managed and controlled by those whose problems they are formed to address.

Before discussing how housing co-operatives successfully integrate solutions to housing and other community problems, and to set that discussion within a context, the paper will briefly describe the movement's place within the Canadian housing scene. The paper will conclude with a few comments regarding the movement's future prospects.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING AND THE CANADIAN HOUSING SCENE

Canada has never had a comprehensive social housing policy. From the beginning, Canadian housing policy has been dominated by two beliefs: that individual home ownership is a proper and

realistic aspiration for most Canadians, and that society should rely as much as possible upon an unregulated private market to meet its housing needs.

The development of Canadian social housing programmes bears witness to this attitude. When, after years of chronic low-rental problems and protracted advocacy for government action, the federal government intervened in the rental market beginning in 1938, its forays were largely designed to support the private market.¹ The initiatives challenged neither the principle of housing as a commodity nor the myth of market efficiency and, unfortunately, failed to have a significant impact on the problem. By the 1960s, it was evident outside government that the profit oriented motives of the private development sector were incompatible with the construction of good quality housing, affordable to lower income households.

Amendments to the National Housing Act (NHA) in 1973, which introduced non-profit and co-operative programmes, marked the birth of the continuing non-profit co-operative housing movement in Canada.² The programmes represented the culmination of a long battle on the part of co-operative housing advocates who had, for years, been hampered by a widespread public misunderstanding of an alien concept like non-profit, collectively owned housing and by the lack of an effective technical delivery capability. The success of five pilot co-operative housing projects, funded through a two hundred million dollar federal loan fund in 1970, paved the way for the 1973 amendments. The development of these projects coincided with an expansive public mood, a growing interest in community control of neighbourhoods, and an acknowledgement of the virtues of income mixing, after the experience with 100 percent low income public housing projects, public protests against urban redevelopment, rising house prices and rents, and the failure of a federal programme which subsidized private sector rental developments for low- and moderate-income families in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the four years following the introduction of the co-operative housing programme, approximately 240 co-operatives representing 10,000 housing units were developed.³ New provisions, introduced in 1979, were even more readily utilized, and between 1979 and 1985, approximately 34,000 additional units in 900 projects were developed.⁴ In 1986, a new unilateral federal co-operative housing programme, based on an index-linked mortgage (ILM), replaced the former programme. The first 6,700 units financed under the ILM programme were committed in 1986 and 1987.

After twenty years of development, the co-operative housing movement still represents only a very small fraction of the total Canadian housing market. Today, there are an estimated 51,700 units of co-operative housing in over 1,350 projects,⁵ representing 1.6 percent of the rental housing stock.⁶ Yet the potential for future growth is significant. Although, when viewed in a global context, Canadian housing standards are exceptionally high, a significant minority of Canadians continue to face serious and

persistent housing problems. Most notably, there is a critical lack of affordable accommodation. More than 18 percent of Canadian households, including 23 percent of renters and 19.5 percent of home owners with mortgages, payed more than 30 percent of their net income for suitable and adequate shelter in 1982.⁷ In addition, persistently low vacancy rates have become the norm in the rental market in many Canadian cities, and very little housing has been developed for people with physical disabilities or other special needs. In several major urban centres, house prices have risen faster than incomes, resulting in an increase in the proportion of households that rent.⁸ Given the generally lower incomes of tenants compared with homeowners⁹ and the large proportion of renters with limited incomes,¹⁰ renters, who in 1987 comprised 37.4 percent of Canadian households,¹¹ face some of the most serious housing problems in Canada today. Due to these conditions, the effective demand for co-operative housing is very strong.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING AS A VEHICLE FOR MULTI-FACETED PROBLEM RESOLUTION

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Non-profit co-operative housing addresses the housing affordability problem in a number of ways. First, because of their non-profit character, co-operative units, which may come on stream at rent levels reflecting those in the rental market, tend to be more affordable over time than comparable housing in the investor owned rental sector. Housing charges in the majority of units produced under the former programme rise only to cover increases in operating costs. Under the new ILM Program, housing charges also rise to cover an indexed increase in mortgage payments, but members continue to be insulated from increases related to the profit motive. Second, co-op members have an incentive to control project operating costs in that reduced operating costs are reflected in lower monthly housing charges. Third, co-operative units contribute to a permanent stock of affordable housing in that they are never resold or refinanced to extract the appreciated value for the owner. Thus, second generation co-operative members fare much better than second generation homeowners, who must absorb the cost of the previous owner's capital gain. Finally, housing co-operatives contribute to the affordable housing stock by taking advantage of government programmes designed to permit a proportion of their units to be occupied by low-income members.

APPROPRIATE AND SUITABLE HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

From its initial focus on mixed-income communities, the co-operative housing movement has gradually expanded its horizons to include the provision, within integrated community environments, of housing for people with unique design and support service requirements. People with special needs,

many of whom experience difficulty finding suitable housing on the private market, are attracted to co-operatives by their affordability and security of tenure, the owners' influence over design and management, and the sense of empowerment offered by co-ops. The preliminary results of a survey recently conducted by Co-operative Housing Foundation (CHF) indicate that fifteen special needs groups, ranging from the mobility and mentally impaired to single parents, battered women, Native Canadians and refugee groups, are represented in this sector. Fully 23 percent of all housing projects developed under the co-operative housing programmes serve special needs households, with most of these projects serving more than one special needs group.

The survey also suggests that almost 20 percent of all housing projects developed under the co-operative housing programmes to date contain units modified for the physically disabled. Indeed, people with physical disabilities are the most common special group housed in housing co-operatives. Co-operatives that receive federal programme financing are required to design a minimum of 5 percent of their units to be accessible by the physically disabled, unless site conditions or the location of support services makes this impracticable. Some co-operatives, such as Daly in Ottawa and Windward in Toronto, have been designed as completely accessible, allowing members with disabilities to live in any unit in the building and to socialize equally with disabled and non-disabled members. As well, a co-operative resource group in Vancouver specializes in housing the disabled and in promoting totally accessible and adaptable co-operative housing projects.

Other special needs groups which are particularly well represented in housing co-operatives include the elderly and women. Several co-operatives have been developed exclusively for senior citizens. However, a more common way of housing the elderly in co-operatives is to integrate them with a wide range of age groups in mixed projects. By doing this, the seniors are able to remain in the mainstream of activity and to help operate the co-operative to the extent they wish. Women have found that living in and assuming leadership roles in housing co-operatives enhances their control over their environment and provides security and stability for their families. A 1985 study found that the majority of residents and committee members in Toronto co-operatives are women,¹² and that women chair 60 percent of committees and hold 52 percent of directorships.¹³ A series of 1982 studies published by CHF indicated that an average of 20 percent of co-operative units surveyed in four major urban areas housed single parent families, most of which were female-led.¹⁴ Organized women's groups have also been active in co-operative housing, either by sponsoring co-operatives for particular female client groups or by arranging with existing co-operatives to provide transitional or permanent housing for battered women and teenage mothers.

THE CREATION OF COMMUNITIES

An important goal of the Canadian co-operative housing movement is the creation of communities which develop a sense of identity and solidarity among residents. For many in the co-operative housing movement, the quality of community created is equal in importance to the physical quality of co-operative units. Indeed, communities shape lives, and membership in healthy communities has been credited with countering isolation, apathy and personal and social instability, and with fostering the development of support networks and a sense of individual commitment and responsibility.

Co-operative housing contributes to the creation of communities through the institutionalization of activities that must be undertaken jointly by members. Given the co-operative principle of democratic control, co-operative members share responsibility for problem solving and goal setting. User participation in the planning, design and development phases of the project creates a sense of community even before the first unit is under construction.¹⁵ Although it is sometimes several years after initial occupancy before the community functions smoothly, the rewards are significant.

While few studies have been conducted to obtain quantitative data on the community building aspects of Canadian housing co-operatives, a longitudinal study of one co-operative published in 1976 found that, outside of organized meetings and events, 50 percent of the couples sampled reported visiting regularly with other members of the co-operative, and indicated that they would seek support from other members in three given hypothetical situations.¹⁶

It is the testimonials of those living in co-operatives, however, that really attest to the extent to which housing co-operatives achieve their goal of creating communities. In a letter to Canadian co-operative housing pioneer Alexander Laidlaw, a British Columbia co-operator wrote:

The people living in this villa. . . make(s) up a common community and so all participate in the usual kind of life and there is no isolation of any one group. A community centre provides a social gathering place. . . . The play room and hall facilities for games and other social activities bring the residents together to participate in common interests. . . . Those coming from a big city background have once again discovered the pioneer spirit of inter-dependence and to their surprise have come to value it highly. . . . Friendships grow with concern for each other's welfare. Where help is needed, genuinely concerned neighbours are always at hand.¹⁷

Similarly, a Calgary co-operative member wrote:

We've enjoyed watching Sarcee Meadows growing into a community—not just a collection of housing units but a dynamic group of people interested in acting in the interests of their families and neighbours.¹⁸

PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The opportunities that housing co-operatives present for personal growth and development derive largely from the fundamental principle of self-help. Members must work together to help themselves and solve mutual problems. Through group management, co-operative members are presented with opportunities to learn to work together and acquire new skills in organizing, communication and decision-making. By taking control of their living environment, co-operative members acquire an enhanced sense of self-sufficiency, self-worth, responsibility, competence and achievement.

These gains in personal growth are especially meaningful to individuals who are financially or otherwise disadvantaged and for whom such opportunities are rare. A study of the Prairie Housing Co-operative in Winnipeg, a co-operative committed to integrating units for people with developmental handicaps into a normal community, revealed that most of the members with mental disabilities were active in routine maintenance and were partaking effectively in co-operative decision-making. Six of nine such members had increased their work and educational involvements since joining the co-operative.¹⁹ Another study found that membership in the Joint Action Co-operative in Regina, a co-operative that provides single parents with affordable housing and day care, were pivotal in helping the parents end their dependence on welfare payments and move on into work or educational settings.²⁰

A co-operative member confined to a wheelchair, however, provides the most eloquent testimony to the empowering influence of co-operatives:

After five years of having to put up with almost inaccessible housing, I finally found a place in which I can use my abilities. Coming into a co-operative was, however, the real bonus. In most instances, I have found friends and neighbours expressing an attitude of understanding, rather than pity. Encouragement, help and respect, rather than protection and condescension. Interest and co-operation rather than mere tolerance. I have, in Woodsworth, people who trust in me as a full-fledged member—a human being who can contribute to the health of our community. I feel that my abilities, rather than my disabilities, are the focus of my being here.²¹

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE

One of the primary benefits flowing from co-operative housing to the community-at-large is the interest on the part of co-operative members in society and civic affairs. The non-profit bias of co-operatives and the sense of responsibility and accomplishment spawned by co-operative ownership and management recently inspired several dozen housing co-operatives and credit unions in Toronto to organize simultaneous drives among their members to collect food for a local food bank.

From these practices of co-operative members, providing both for their own needs and for those of the larger community, flows a second benefit to society: decreased dependence on government institutions and public services. In the words of former Canadian Deputy Prime Minister, Allan MacEachen:

Co-operatives have a self regulatory feature. . . . a built-in automatic mechanism that makes a great deal of government activity either unnecessary or much lighter. . . . The voluntary or democratic working of a co-operative means so much less regulation by the state at the expense of the public purse. . . . The more effective co-operative action we have in our economy, the less need we shall have for the machinery of government regulating the business affairs of the people.²²

Illustrative of this point, the ownership structure of Canadian housing co-operatives eliminates the often adversarial relationship between landlords and tenants, and with it the necessity of costly enforcement of tenant protection. Similarly, the members' interest in keeping housing costs low constitutes a system of voluntary rent control, eliminating the necessity for government legislation and enforcement. The results are not only reduced public expenditure on services and law enforcement, but healthy, vigorous communities in which people take control and work together to meet their common needs.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION AND STABILIZATION

Housing co-operatives in Canada have played a small but important role in integrating, revitalizing and stabilizing neighbourhoods. Co-operatives promote social and economic integration at both the project and neighbourhood level. The principle of social mix ensures that low-income households enjoy an alternative to living in 100 percent low-income housing. People with special needs, such as the disabled and the elderly, many of whom were formerly limited to institutional living environments, enjoy the opportunity to live independently within a supportive and socially diverse community. At the neighbourhood level, inner-city co-operatives help maintain a social mix in the face of increasing gentrification. In the suburbs, co-operatives often provide the only affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households in desirable, family-oriented neighbourhoods, whose residents are sometimes less than keen on heterogeneity.

The security of tenure inherent in co-operative ownership is also key in stabilizing both the co-operative community and its surrounding neighbourhood. Moreover, the rehabilitation of older rental stock or the conversion of non-residential buildings to non-profit co-operative housing has demonstrated the potential of co-operatives to preserve the social and physical fabric of neighbourhoods threatened by demolition or gentrification, and to spark new life in depopulating and deteriorating areas. In Montreal, for example, the residents of the downtown Milton Park neighbourhood, aided by several community

associations, fought plans for the demolition and redevelopment of their modest homes. They succeeded in taking control of and preserving their neighbourhood by purchasing several city blocks, and incorporating a number of housing co-operatives and non-profit corporations to take ownership of the housing. Similarly, the tenants of the Bain Apartments in Toronto, some of whom had lived in the complex for twenty or thirty years, saved their homes and community by forming a co-operative when the units were put on the condominium market at prices far beyond their means. Dalhousie Co-operative in Ottawa rehabilitated old housing in a decaying working class neighbourhood that had become largely transient. This facilitated a form of ownership among remaining residents, and a new sense of pride in and commitment to the area. Numerous examples of these types of co-operative initiatives have been repeated in urban neighbourhoods across the country, and most have sparked parallel efforts by other non-profit groups in the communities concerned. These examples serve to underline the conclusion reached by an American report on housing co-operatives:

Housing co-operatives have succeeded in bringing back the spirit of neighbourliness and community that had all but disappeared from many low- and middle-income areas of our big cities. They create feelings of permanence and sociability.²³

PROBLEMS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Notwithstanding the success to date of the Canadian co-operative housing movement, its future as a significant presence in the housing market is not assured. Several factors--some inherent in the organizational model of the co-operatives and others present in the external environment--could limit the movement's growth in the future. Each is briefly discussed below.

MANAGEMENT

Despite an array of benefits, self-management has several drawbacks. First, the participation requirement on members can be burdensome and unequally distributed. Second, co-operatives managed by volunteers are highly dependent on the skills of their members and are vulnerable to loss of management due to membership turnover. Even co-operatives large enough to employ one or more full-time staff find it difficult to recruit managers with the appropriate mix of property management and community development experience and skills. The movement is addressing these difficulties by providing training materials and courses for both volunteers and employees.

CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

There is a tendency among most owners of property, including co-operative homeowners, to reduce their short-term costs by under-maintaining the property at the expense of maximizing its useful life. In co-op projects, the problem is exacerbated by low government controls on product cost. The results have been reduced project quality and high maintenance and replacement costs. Although it is a condition of the programmes under which most co-operatives in Canada have been funded that the co-operative set aside a reserve for future capital replacements, where maintenance has been inadequate, these reserves may prove insufficient to meet the replacements required. The movement has taken several steps to deal with both of these problems, including educating members and staff in the importance of proper building maintenance, developing techniques for building condition studies and reserve fund planning, encouraging co-operatives to increase their reserves, and persuading government to increase reserve requirements and price control levels for newly funded co-operatives.

PRESERVING CO-OPERATIVES AS NOT-FOR-PROFIT HOUSING

In the long term, the ability of housing co-operatives to provide accommodation for low- and moderate-income households depends on the continuing not-for-profit character of the housing. There is considerable risk, however, that members may try to earn individual capital gains, either by winding up the corporation and distributing the net assets among themselves, or by converting from collective ownership to some form of individual ownership. Two initiatives have been discussed to protect against conversion: to have co-operatives lease their land from community land trusts controlled by the movement, and to seek amendments to provincial co-operative statutes to ensure that, once organized, non-profit co-operatives cannot convert to another type of corporation. To protect against the development of a black market for co-operative housing shares, the movement has imposed restrictions on subletting, and has prohibited members from transferring their occupancy rights, except through the co-operative.

LACK OF CAPITAL

Each housing co-operative is legally and financially autonomous, and operates on a break-even basis. As such, the movement has no significant ability to raise development capital internally, rendering it almost completely dependent on government programmes for start-up assistance. Moreover, the government has imposed an upper limit on the number of units it will finance through the programme, and has developed an onerous bureaucratic process to access funding. The movement has attempted to

overcome these barriers by developing a risk capital pool, funded by housing co-operatives and socially-minded organizations, to underwrite start-up loans to new co-operatives.

FINANCING SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

Because housing co-operatives are virtually self-sufficient once built and have no compelling economic reason to organize and finance strong regional and national federations, insufficient resources are available to fund the support services which individual co-operatives need. The existence of local, regional and national associations is critical, not only to the successful operation of housing co-operatives, but also to the continued expansion of the movement. In the past twenty years, CHF and its member federations have played an essential role in developing public support for co-operatives and lobbying governments to introduce effective financing programmes. Efforts are underway in the movement to address the underfunding of sector organizations. For the past few years, the members of CHF have voted almost to double their membership dues. Similarly, local federations have sought and obtained substantial membership fee increases.

PUBLIC POLICY ENVIRONMENT

The greatest impediment to the future expansion of the co-operative housing sector in Canada lies in a public policy environment that is antipathetic to the aims of co-operatives. Housing co-operatives, with their emphasis on community non-profit ownership and social and economic integration, run directly counter to the current government's views that public subsidies should be directed exclusively toward the neediest households, and that all others can afford to buy or rent a home in the profit-oriented private sector. The introduction of the new co-operative programme in 1986, which preserved the principle of income mix, was an anomaly explained largely by the movement's past success in lobbying the federal government. Although the programme has been guaranteed a five year life, it appears likely that it will be terminated at the end of the period, at which time rent-geared-to-income payments will be imposed on all members, or the operating subsidy formula will be revised to ensure that co-operative housing charges never fall below the level of rents in the private sector.

CONCLUSION

Despite the negative policy environment and the other problems outlined above, Canada's co-operative housing movement looks to the future with considerable optimism for a number of reasons. First, the welding together of non-profit and co-operative principles produces a uniquely effective vehicle for meeting housing and other social needs. Second, there is a need for an affordable alternative to both

owner occupied and private rental housing, and co-operative housing has become a desirable option among households unable to compete in the private market. Indeed, many co-operative development resource groups across Canada maintain waiting lists two and three years long, and a January 1987 Gallup Poll commissioned by CHF found that 50 percent of renter households were open to trying the co-operative housing option.²⁴ Third, public awareness and perception of co-operative housing itself has increased and grown more favourable. A recent Gallup Poll commissioned by CHF found that many of those surveyed had not only heard of housing co-operatives, but also felt positive about them and favoured government financial support for co-operatives.²⁵ Finally, many of the principles underlying co-operative housing and the goals espoused by the movement are consistent with current public opinion. According to a 1985 survey undertaken by Environics Research Group, a majority of responding households agreed that recipients of government housing assistance should be housed in a mixed setting containing some market rental units instead of being segregated in 100 percent low-income projects.²⁶ A 1986 Environics survey found that the majority of respondents favoured integrating into the community former mental patients, low-income single- and two-parent families, low-income seniors and the physically disabled.²⁷

Given its successes in addressing the housing problem, and backed by public support, the co-operative housing movement will continue to urge government to base its housing policies not on narrow ideological, statistical and fiscal analyses, but rather on the potential for alternative solutions to address the quality of life and housing needs of both individuals and communities in Canada.

NOTES

1. The federal government did introduce public housing programmes in 1949 and 1964. The weak federal commitment to addressing the affordable housing problem is underscored, however, by the fact that Canada's 253,000 public housing units currently represent less than 3 percent of total Canadian housing stock. This figure is based on a total housing stock of 8,756,675 units. See Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), *Canadian Housing Statistics* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1986), Table 103, and CMHC, *1986 Annual Report* (Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1986), p. 1.
2. "Building" co-operatives, in which homes were constructed co-operatively but owned individually, had been popular in Eastern Canada during the 1930s and 1940s, but the model was impractical in rapidly urbanizing post-war Canada.
3. Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada (CHF), *From the Rooftops* (Ottawa: CHF, September 1978): Special Supplement.
4. Calculations from CHF, *From the Rooftops*, various issues and CMHC, *Canadian Housing Statistics*, various years.
5. These figures include occupied units and those currently under construction. CHF, *Directory of Housing Co-operatives* (Ottawa: CHF, November 1987), Statistical Summary. Note that the figures cited for 1973-1978, 1979-1985 and 1986 do not add up to the 1987 total. This is because a number of co-operative housing units, of which CHF had previously been unaware, were produced in Quebec over the years. The 1987 figures include these heretofore "lost" units.
6. Calculations based on a total housing stock figure of 8,756,675 dwellings and a renter household percentage of 37.4. See CMHC, *Canadian Housing Statistics*, 1986, Table 103, and Statistics Canada, *Canada at a Glance*, 1987 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1987).
7. Canada, *Consultation Paper on Housing* (Ottawa: January, 1985), p. 16, Appendix I.
8. Toronto's renter population increased 38 percent in 1951 to 59 percent in 1981; Vancouver's from 37 percent to 55 percent; Calgary's from 41 percent to 43 percent; Edmonton's from 39 percent to 50 percent; Hamilton's from 35 percent to 44 percent; Ottawa's from 57 percent to 61 percent; Halifax's from 53 percent to 60 percent. See Canada, *Census of Canada*, various years.
9. In 1985, renter incomes averaged 58 percent lower than home owner incomes. Calculated from figures in Statistics Canada, *Household Facilities by Income and Other Characteristics* (Catalogue 13-567 Occasional; Ottawa: Supply and Services, 1985), Table 10.
10. In 1981, 57 percent of renters were drawn from the lowest two income quintiles. See J.D. Hulchanski, "Tax Costs of Housing," *Policy Options* (June 1985), Table 1.0.
11. See Statistics Canada, *Canada at a Glance*, 1987.
12. See Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto, *The Circuit*, 9,1 (March 1987): 4.

13. See CHF, *Co-observations* (Ottawa: CHF, Spring 1986), p. 6.
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24. CHF internal memo.
25. CHF internal memo.
26. Environics Research Groups Limited, *Homes National Housing Policy Report, Summer 1985* (Toronto: Environics, 1985), p. 9.
27. The survey reported less than majority support only for integrating young offenders and adults on parole. Environics Research Group Limited, *Homes National Housing Policy Report*, p. 6.



INFILL HOUSING: FIVE YEARS LATER CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

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The City of St. John's is the capital of the Province of Newfoundland. According to the 1986 Census, it has a population of 96,216, with a metropolitan area population of 161,901. As a community, St. John's is over 400 years old. It is the administrative, economic, cultural and educational centre for the Province, and the major port and service centre for central and eastern Newfoundland. The City is also a relatively depressed urban area in comparison with other Canadian cities. The current unemployment rate is 10 percent, the highest among Canadian cities, and spending power is low. In 1985, families had a median annual income of \$23,538, with over 17 percent of families earning less than \$15,000 annually.

St. John's has a very unique urban form. The Downtown in particular is characterized by rows of two and three storey buildings of Victorian and turn of the century vintage, built along the steep slopes rising from the harbour. Some of these buildings are of poor quality, as they were built under emergency conditions following a succession of fires that destroyed parts of the Downtown throughout the nineteenth century.

St. John's has a history of utilizing a wide range of programmes designed to improve living conditions. For instance, almost all of the inner city was included in Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) areas, and to date over 1,203 properties, or 6 percent of all residential properties, have been refurbished under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). This programme continues to be widely used by the City.

In 1982, the St. John's Municipal Council introduced the concept of infill housing in its Zoning By-Law to encourage residential redevelopment on vacant lots, and to facilitate the rehabilitation of existing housing stock in older neighbourhoods. Under the Zoning Regulations, infill housing development is allowed as a conditional use in two high density residential zones, the RD and R-3 zones, which are in and adjacent to the Downtown. As a conditional use under these zones, and at the discretion of the Council, density bonuses and relief from the Regulations are granted for infill developments, provided they do not exceed four dwelling units, are in harmony with existing design, and meet with no major neighbourhood objection at public hearings.

Infill development within St. John's was pioneered by the City for its Urban Living (non-profit housing) Program. Since then, infill development has been widely used by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) for public housing, and by private developers for the supply of rental units. In general, infill housing developments in St. John's are perceived in a positive light.¹

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF INFILL HOUSING, DOWNTOWN AND
REST OF CITY, CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

1982-1986

	1982		1983		1984		1985		1986		GRAND TOTAL	
	No. of Dev.*	No. of D.U.'s**	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'s	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'s	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'s	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'s	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'s
Downtown												
(Total)	3	7	10	18	26	45	16	42	28	59	83	171
East	1	2	3	5	8	15	7	21	7	17	26	60
West	2	5	7	13	18	30	9	21	21	42	57	111
Rest of City	2	4	4	10	3	7	12	30	16	34	37	85
GRAND TOTAL	5	11	14	28	39	29	28	72	44	93	120	256

* Dev. - Developments

** D.U.'s - Dwelling Units.

Recently, however, there have been concerns expressed by Downtown East End homeowners regarding the effects of infill housing on parking, density and residential mix. As a result of these concerns, in 1987, Council placed a temporary moratorium on all infill developments pending an evaluation of the regulations governing infill housing. This study was conducted as part of the evaluation process.

DISTRIBUTION

Between 1982 and 1986, a total of 120 infill housing projects were completed in St. John's, giving a total of 256 dwelling units. The majority of these projects (69%) are concentrated in the City's Downtown residential areas, occurring in clusters in the east and more scattered in the west, where the bulk of infill projects are located. While infill development tended to concentrate in the Downtown area throughout the 1982 to 1986 period, increased activity occurred outside this area after 1984 (Table 1). Infill development, both inside and outside Downtown St. John's, peaked in 1986.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INFILL HOUSING IN ST. JOHN'S

TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPER

Between 1982 and 1986, a total of 57 new developments (102 units) and 63 rehabilitations (156 units) were completed in St. John's. Prior to 1986, 56 percent of all infill projects were new developments. By the end of 1986, rehabilitation became the dominant form of infill activity, accounting for 53 percent of the total number of projects undertaken since 1982. The number of rehabilitated infill projects increased dramatically in 1985, and by 1986, the number of rehabilitated units exceeded the number of new units by 51 percent (Table 2).

When the data are disaggregated by type of developer, it is found that the largest number of infill projects in St. John's were undertaken by private developers—53 percent of the total, compared with 33 percent by NLHC and 14 percent by the City (Table 3). Over 92 percent of all privately initiated infill projects were rehabilitated. The City and NLHC, on the other hand, have provided predominantly new infill. In fact, 82 percent of the City's infill projects and 95 percent of NLHC's were new. It is also important to note that while in 1986 infill activity for private developers peaked, it also increased considerably for NLHC from its 1985 level, but declined drastically for the City.

TABLE 2
ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION OF INFILL
HOUSING BY TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

1982-1986				
YEAR	NEW		REHABILITATION	
	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'S	No. of Dev.	No. of D.U.'S
1982	5	11	0	0
1983	12	22	2	6
1984	17	24	12	28
1985	8	22	20	50
1986	15	23	29	70
TOTAL	57	102	63	154

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF INFILL HOUSING
BY TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEVELOPER
CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

	DEVELOPER		
	CITY	NLHC	PRIVATE
No. of Developments	17	40	63
New	14	38	5
Rehabilitated	3	2	58
No. of Units	36	59	161
New	30	55	17
Rehabilitated	6	4	144

DENSITY

Between 1982 and 1986, infill housing developments in St. John's had, on average, 2.1 dwelling units per development. Privately developed infill projects, however, had an average of 2.6 dwelling units per development compared with 2.1 and 1.5 for City and NLHC developments respectively (Table 4). When new developments and rehabilitations are compared, it is clear that, in general, rehabilitated developments had higher densities than new developments. This was particularly true for those developments that were initiated either privately or by NLHC. Annual variation in the average number of dwelling units per development was negligible.

When the average floor area per dwelling unit for all infill projects built between 1982 and 1986 is examined, it is found that new developments had larger units than rehabilitations. However, when comparison is made between developers and infill type, it is evident that privately initiated new units were comparable in size to those built by NLHC and the City, and that private rehabilitated units were considerably smaller. It should be noted that even these smaller units were well above the average size of one and two bedroom apartment units in the City.

Statistics on the average land area per dwelling unit indicate that for all infill projects, there was 98 m² per dwelling unit compared with 110 m² per dwelling unit for new developments, and 90 m² per dwelling unit for rehabilitations. When disaggregated by year of development and developers, it is apparent that while there was some variation in land area per development by year of development, NLHC on average provided the most land area for all types of development, the City had the least, and private developers were in between.

It is evident from Table 4 that in all cases, new developments had more land per dwelling unit than rehabilitations. However, with the exception of two developments in 1985, all infill projects were well in excess of the minimum land size requirement specified in the Zoning By-Law at the time. According to the Zoning By-Law, the minimum land area per dwelling unit for infill should not be less than 70 m² in the Residential High Density (R-3) Zone and 40 m² in the Residential Downtown (RD) Zone. (In the case of the RD zone, this is the highest allowable density requirement of residential zones in the City). The average land area for infill projects built in the R-3 and RD Zones between 1982 and 1986 were 147 and 88 m² respectively.

TABLE 4
DENSITY FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF ST. JOHN'S

1982-1986

	CITY	NLHC	PRIVATE
Average No. of Units per Development	2.1	1.5	2.6
New	2.1	1.4	3.4
Rehabilitated	2.0	2.0	2.5
Average Floor Space per Unit (m ²)	90.7	97.9	77.1
New	90.6	98.5	88.2
Rehabilitated	91.5	90.4	75.6
Average Land Area per Development (m ²)	84.4	122.3	92.5
New	90.2	125.8	93.8
Rehabilitated	55.3	73.8	92.4

TABLE 5
NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS AND PARKING SPACES 1982-1986

	New		Rehabilitated		Total	
	D.U.	Parking	D.U.	Parking	D.U.	Parking
1982	11	4	0	0	11	4
1983	22	16	6	8	28	24
1984	24	11	28	15	52	26
1985	22	22	50	20	72	42
1986	23	23	70	47	93	70
TOTAL	102	76	154	90	256	166

PARKING

On the whole, an average of 0.6 off-street parking spaces was provided per dwelling unit for all infill developments. The majority of the parking spaces, however, were provided in new developments. In fact, 75 percent of new units were provided with parking compared with only 58 percent of rehabilitated units. The average number of parking spaces for new units was 0.7 compared with 0.6 for rehabilitations. In general, 1986 showed an improvement in parking provision over the previous years (Table 5).

The East End of the downtown, which already had an existing parking deficiency, was provided with less parking space per infill dwelling unit than either the West End or outside the Downtown area. In summary, the distribution of average parking spaces per development is as follows:

All Infill Projects	0.65
Downtown	0.53
East End	0.35
West End	0.62
Rest of the City	0.89

PREVIOUS USE

Prior to redevelopment, about 70 percent of all infill developments were either vacant lots, attached single units or semi-attached single units. Together, these accounted for 65 percent of the total infill units in St. John's. The largest group subject to infill was attached single unit buildings, followed by vacant lots and semi-detached single unit buildings. It is important to note, however, that the highest density was achieved by infilling vacant lots. This was particularly true in the case of privately developed vacant lots.

Further examination of the data indicates that while the City was engaged in the conversion of vacant lands to new dwelling units, NLHC was largely demolishing attached single units and semi-detached and detached single units to provide new units; private developers were converting a large variety of housing types, but particularly the attached and semi-detached single units, which alone accounted for 44 percent of the rehabilitated units.

CONDITION OF BUILDINGS PRIOR TO INFILL

The largest proportion (42.5%) of properties acquired for infill was in poor condition prior to development. A significant number of properties, however, were considered to be in good condition (Table 6). While about 69 percent of the buildings in poor condition were rehabilitated, 39 percent of those in good and fair condition were replaced by new units. A large proportion of the properties acquired by private developers and NLHC were in good condition. While private developers rehabilitated

TABLE 6
CONDITION OF PROPERTIES PRIOR TO INFILL

Previous Condition	No. of Properties	%
Good	17	14.8
Fair	21	17.5
Poor	51	42.5
Demolishable	14	11.7
Vacant Lots	17	14.2

all their good buildings, NLHC replaced all theirs. The City, on the other hand, was engaged primarily in replacing vacant lots and poor and demolishable buildings with new dwelling units.

IMPACTS OF INFILL DEVELOPMENT IN ST. JOHN'S DENSITY

An analysis of density change in terms of average number of units per development indicates that when vacant lots are excluded from the analysis, the average number of units per development increased from 1.3 before development to 2.2 after development, or an additional 0.9 units per development. When vacant lots are included in the analysis, the density changes from 1.0 to 2.1, an increase of 1.1 units per development. In absolute terms, this translates into 81 additional units when vacant lots are excluded from the analysis, and 133 units when vacant lots are included. Of the total additional units in the latter case, 81 (61%) were in the Downtown area. Despite the increase in the number of units per development after infill, the land area per development was well above the minimum for the area as specified in the Zoning By-Law.

PARKING

Parking deficiency, as a result of infill activity, was most likely to be a problem in the Downtown area of St. John's. In fact, for the infill programme to have had no effect on the Downtown parking situation, at least 81 new parking spaces would have had to have been provided. The actual number of parking spaces provided in the downtown was 90. Although this suggests that the infill programme did not produce a negative impact on the existing parking situation, in reality, the provision of off-street parking resulted in a net loss of on-street parking. It is estimated that at least 0.5 on-street parking space is lost when a driveway is created for an off-street parking space. Although data on the type of off-street parking provided are not available, if it is assumed that a driveway is provided for each on-street parking space for the infill developments, then there could be a possible shortfall of 30.5 parking spaces, most of them in the East End. It is important to note that the shortfall could be much less, as off-street parking in a number of cases is provided off-site and along parking zones.

CONCLUSION

The first five years of the Infill Housing Program in St. John's can be considered a success. Both the public and private sectors have used the programme extensively to upgrade substandard dwellings and provide new units on vacant lots. Although the use of the programme gave the City, particularly the

Downtown, a much needed face lift, it also exacerbated an existing parking problem and increased density to a level considered undesirable by many residents. To address these problems, the City modified the Regulations by lowering the acceptable density level and placing stricter control on parking provision.

NOTES

1. The City received design awards from the Canadian Design Council and the Consumers Association of Canada for its infill housing.
2. In the case of the RD zone, this is the highest allowable density requirement of residential zones in the City.



GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF HOUSING RENOVATION IN EDMONTON

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The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the geography of private-market housing renovations in Edmonton, as derived from a major study which is still in progress. A large data base has been compiled and the analyses are well advanced, although the results cannot be interpreted at any length here. In this preliminary paper, we do not aim to do more than describe the overall characteristics of housing renovation activity in Edmonton, and from that to begin to explore the explanatory variables that will allow us to answer the ultimate research question: is there a distinctive spatial pattern to housing renovations in Edmonton and, if so, why? This obviously requires us to be able to locate all the renovations that have been completed over some appropriate area and period, and to be able to classify the renovations by their key characteristics, both following from the presumption that housing renovations will take on different forms in different parts of the city. The *geography* of housing renovations is not just a matter of determining where, within the city, renovations are occurring; it is also, and more fundamentally, concerned with explaining the spatial variations in the characteristics of housing renovation. For the present purpose, three characteristics will be concentrated upon. They are the frequency, type and value of private market renovations.

The paper is organized in five sections. First, we explain the choice of study area and study period, and briefly describe the character of the study area. Then we describe the data base, and discuss the implications of the primary data source for the research design—the primary data source being the property assessment records housed in the residential assessment section of the Office of the City Assessor in Edmonton. In the next three sections of the paper, we present our results, beginning with descriptive statistics that depict the general nature of housing renovations in the study area. Next, we consider the location of housing renovations, and present a brief description of their spatial variations, with particular emphasis on the distribution of large-scale renovations.¹ Finally, we present a preliminary analysis of the geographical factors in renovation, in order to try to explain the major features of the spatial pattern. The underlying theoretical issue relates to the widely held perception that housing renovations are a function of social upgrading, particularly gentrification—"gentrification" being used here in its original meaning of an upward social succession, in which the residents of an aging, deteriorating quarter are supplanted by people of much higher social status, who then rehabilitate their newly acquired houses through extensive (and expensive) renovations. We did not attempt to analyze social change for this paper, since our first concern was to establish the evidence for physical upgrading, but the research was designed in a way that will allow the assumed relationship between renovation activity and social change in relatively old residential districts to be tested for its pertinence to Edmonton. It is important to reiterate, however, that we were looking for evidence of renovation in all its forms, not just gentrification.

Here, we were influenced by findings from previous studies in Saskatoon,² Halifax,³ and Kitchener,⁴ which demonstrate that gentrification is by no means the only explanation for private market housing renovation in Canadian cities.

CHOICE OF STUDY AREA AND STUDY PERIOD

The determination of the study area (Figure 1¹) was based on three criteria:

1. To be able to test for a geographical relationship between housing renovations and social change, it was necessary to design the research to focus on areas where the market can be presumed to have operated freely within the limits of planning and building regulations. We therefore excluded neighbourhoods that have received government aid under the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. By definition, RRAP areas are supposed to be socially stable, and RRAP funds were intended to stimulate incumbent upgrading by helping low-income owner-occupiers to bring their houses up to a decent standard of safety and comfort.
2. To satisfy the condition of "relatively old residential districts," the study area is designed to correspond as closely as possible to the built-up area of 1951. Edmonton is a comparatively young city even by Canadian standards, and less than 10 percent of the present housing stock is more than 35 years old. In Edmonton's particular context, anything built before 1951 is relatively old. The 1951 boundary also serves to separate inner-city grid pattern neighbourhoods, built on land subdivided before the First World War, from the planned neighbourhoods of the 1950s, which now form an inner ring of suburbs.⁵
3. To analyze spatial patterns within the study area, we had to be able to assemble data on a small-area basis. Since we also wished to relate housing data from the assessment records to population data, census enumeration areas were the obvious choice. Our operational criterion was that an enumeration area would be included in the study area if 50 percent of its houses were constructed before 1951. This reflects the fact that much of Edmonton's early residential development was scattered haphazardly over an extensive area, and the process of infilling was far from complete by 1951. As a consequence, the study area includes a considerable number of houses built after 1951, while excluding some enumeration areas that were partially developed before 1951.

¹For Figures 1-7, see Appendix.

A total of 182 enumeration areas fall within the study area boundaries, although 12 were dropped later when it was found that they no longer had any single-family dwellings. Major areas of non-residential use were also excluded—the central area of Edmonton, which includes the government centre and the wholesaling district as well as the central business district; the University of Alberta and its associated complex of service and research facilities; and the municipal airport and the adjoining campus of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Sites of hospitals and major sports and recreation facilities were also excluded, but not the extensive valley-system parklands, into which the adjoining enumeration areas extend. This results in some unusually large enumeration areas flanking the North Saskatchewan River. (All these features are displayed on the base map used for Figures 3 to 7).

At the other extreme, many of the enumeration areas are tiny, sometimes smaller than a city block. Generally, the smallest units are located in the innermost zone of the study area, in high-density districts that have been extensively redeveloped and now have very few houses left. The mean frequency over the whole study area is 97.2 single-family dwellings per enumeration area, but the range is from 1 to 349. It obviously follows that the enumeration areas with the greatest numbers of houses lie in the outer zone of the study area, and have experienced little or no redevelopment.

In addition to these variations in size, the enumeration areas vary in their physical and social characteristics. Despite the exclusion of the RRAP areas, the study area accounts for a large part of Edmonton's low-cost housing stock, mostly in the form of cottages and small bungalows built in the interwar period or immediately after the Second World War.⁶ Overall, however, the residential character of the study area is mixed in age, size, style and structural condition, reflecting the long-drawn-out development sequence of much of the inner city. To an extent, this is true even of the highest quality enumeration areas that overlook the river valley at the western and eastern boundaries of the study area. These districts have long been recognized as elite residential areas in Edmonton, and yet large proportions of their housing stock are comparatively small and modest in style. This turned out to be a highly significant factor in the geography of housing renovations in Edmonton.

A final point about the study area is that it is essentially the same as the one used by McCann in his exhaustive study of residential change in Edmonton up to 1971.⁷ It seemed logical to start where McCann ended, so our study period extends from 1971 to 1986. Prior to 1971, renovation was an insignificant activity in Edmonton, but by the late 1970s it had become the most extensive form of residential change in the inner city. This also accords with the empirical literature, in which housing renovation is depicted as a phenomenon that emerged in the 1970s.⁸

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF RENOVATED DWELLINGS

N = 1887

	%
Land use code	
Single-family	94.9
Two-family conversion	3.0
Multi-family conversion	1.1
Residential and commercial conversion	0.5
Duplex	0.6
Type of house	
Bungalow	53.7
Semi-bungalow (1½ storey)	27.3
1¼ storey	3.0
2 or more storeys	14.3
Split-level	1.2
Duplex	0.4
Period of construction	
Prior to 1922	15.2
1922 to 1941	16.9
1942 to 1951	56.6
1952 to 1959	11.4
Quality of construction	
Poor	1.0
Poor-to-fair	16.6
Fair	62.7
Fair-to-good	17.7
Good	2.0
Excellent	0.0
Replacement value of dwelling in 1985\$	
10,163 to 31,300	25.0
31,301 to 37,769	25.0
37,770 to 44,316	25.0
44,317 to 182,553	25.0

THE NATURE OF THE HOUSING DATA

The most important methodological issue for this research was the choice of an operational definition of housing renovation. That choice, in turn, was conditioned by the available data. In Edmonton's case, the assessment records provide a detailed, accessible, and reasonably accurate source of information on many different kinds of renovations, but the assessors' essential task is to maintain an up-to-date account of property "values" for tax purposes. If a renovation is one that could somehow change the amount of tax a property-owner might be expected to pay, then it would be clearly recorded on the assessment card for that property; but when renovations are considered to have no tax implications, the assessment records are much less reliable. Some minor kinds of renovations (e.g., installing iron railings on outside steps) are thus itemized in fine detail, whereas other, more substantial renovations may be glossed over or ignored. This applies especially to repairs and alterations that are undertaken in the normal course of maintenance or upkeep, but do not change a house's structural condition. An owner may spend a great deal on redecoration, external painting, roofing, replacing kitchen and bathroom fittings, and so on, without "upgrading" the house in the technical meaning of the assessment rules—that is, without improving on the original construction quality. For the purposes of our research design, that is a critical definition. Since our particular concern is for renovations that might be associated with physical and social upgrading, we can be sure that the assessment records are a valid source of information.

By far the most useful indicator of physical upgrading in Edmonton's assessment records is an increase in what the assessors refer to as the "assessed replacement value" of a dwelling. Replacement value is a complicated technical concept which we will not attempt to explain here, but it must not be confused with the actual cost of renovations to an owner. However, since actual costs are not recorded on the assessment cards, the assessed replacement value is the only measure of the effects of renovations on house values. It is also a measure that is applied consistently to all renovations, and it has the further advantage of being expressed in constant dollars, adjusted periodically for inflation.

With these points in mind, a dwelling was considered to be renovated for the purposes of this study if the renovations caused the assessed replacement value to be increased by at least \$500 in 1977 dollars, the constant that applied when the data were collected. A \$500 limit is admittedly arbitrary, but the intention was to eliminate purely cosmetic additions, such as iron railings, and to reduce the confusion between minor improvements and regular maintenance and upkeep. The assessment records do not always permit a clear distinction to be made between upgrading and maintenance, so the \$500 baseline

TABLE 2
TYPES OF RENOVATIONS COMPLETED 1971-1986

N = 1887

	Number of Cases	Percentage of Renovated dwellings
Single renovation types		
Adding fireplace	471	25.0
Adding bathroom	464	24.6
Finishing basement	522	27.7
Historic restoration	4	0.2
Commercial conversion	5	0.3
Grouped categories of renovation types		
Enlarging house	1,005	53.3
- one-storey extension	799	42.3
- multi-storey extension	162	8.6
- upper full storey added	102	5.4
- upper partial storey added	100	5.3
Adding deck, patio door	617	32.7
Basement repair or construction	117	6.2
Upgrading heating, plumbing, wiring and insulation	331	17.5
Creating living space from garage	44	2.3
Interior renovation, including roofing	427	22.6
Sauna, whirlpool, hot tub or swimming pool	65	3.4

N.B.: Houses may have undergone more than one type or category of renovation, so percentages do not add up to 100.

was adopted as a practical convenience. (The equivalent in 1985 dollars is \$620. Below, all references to assessed replacement values will be in 1985 dollars).

It also emerged during the data collection that renovations sometimes improved the quality of a house without causing its assessed replacement value to rise. For example, a small number of houses in the study area have been restored, which means, in the assessors' terminology, that they have been renovated back to their original quality. This restoration may then cause the 'effective age' of the house to fall, which simply means that it is considered to be younger than its actual age for assessment purposes. That, in turn, causes the depreciation factor built into the property tax formula to be reduced. For the purposes of this study, then, a house was considered to have been renovated if its effective age was reduced, even when its assessed replacement value did not change.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RENOVATION IN EDMONTON

The first and most basic conclusion to emerge from the analysis is that our study area has not been extensively renovated. Of a total of over 16,500 dwellings, only 1,887 (or 11.4%) were renovated between 1971 and 1986. It cannot even be claimed that renovation is increasing in importance in Edmonton, since the peak of activity occurred in 1976 and has levelled off since then (Figure 2). (It should be noted that Figure 2 is based on renovations for which a building permit was issued, and so refers to only 70 percent of the renovated dwellings).

The general characteristics of the renovated dwellings are summarized in Table 1, and some reasonably clear patterns stand out. First, renovations in Edmonton have been concentrated on single-family detached houses (95%), and most commonly on the smallest types of houses—that is, bungalows and semi-bungalows (81%). These houses are not particularly old—85 percent of them were built after 1921 and 68 percent after 1941—so age is less a factor in renovation activity than the original quality of construction, which was generally no more than fair (80%), or fair-to-good at best (18%). 'Fair quality' houses are described in the Assessment Manual as those that provide 'basic housing at a moderate cost with construction meeting minimum CMHC building standards.' They are structurally sound, but tend to be plainly and cheaply finished, inside and out. It follows that their assessed replacement values will be comparatively low, and this was borne out by the fact that 75 percent of the renovated dwellings were valued at less than \$44,300. (This figure also includes the value of the garage, where there was one).

In summary, two main groups of houses have been targets for renovation in Edmonton. The first, which is by far the larger, comprises cheap, generally small houses of fair or poor construction quality;

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF RENOVATION TYPES COMPLETED
PER RENOVATED DWELLING

Number of renovation types or grouped categories (see Table 2)	Number of renovated dwellings	Percentage of renovated dwellings
1	686	36.4
2	523	27.7
3	306	16.2
4	176	9.3
5	97	5.1
6	54	2.9
7	32	1.7
8	11	0.6
9	2	0.1

the second consists generally of larger, better equipped and more expensive houses of good or fair-to-good quality.

Given the general character of the primary target group, it is not surprising to find that the most common types of renovations were aimed either at increasing the size of a house or at adding features that were missing in the original construction (Table 2). The single most frequent class of renovations, applying to more than half of all the renovated houses, was additions of various kinds. One-storey extensions were most common, but there was also a moderate number of multi-storey extensions, as well as some 200 instances where full or partial storeys were added. Another popular way of increasing usable space, affecting 28 percent of the renovated dwellings, was by finishing a basement. The most popular added features were decks (33%), fireplaces (25%) and second bathrooms (25%). Like the space additions, they are best described as improvements that enhance the amenity of a house rather than its structural soundness or safety. This is not to say that amenity renovations were never combined with structural ones in cases of multiple renovations. Overall, however, renovations designed to improve structural conditions were of secondary importance (e.g., heating, plumbing, wiring and insulation were upgraded in only 18% of the renovated houses). In some situations (e.g., the general categories of exterior and interior renovations in Table 2), it is impossible to separate them from amenity renovations.

This interpretive difficulty can be related to the form in which renovation information is recorded on the assessment cards, and the fact that assessors do not have a standard typology. A detailed classification scheme was therefore devised for data collection purposes, incorporating 32 separate classes of renovations. These have been collapsed into 13 in Table 2, although some of the single types (e.g., adding a fireplace) were sufficiently distinct to be retained. It was not uncommon for these to be the only renovations made in individual cases. More frequently, however, more than one type of renovation was carried out (Table 3), usually at the same time; only 10 percent of the renovated dwellings had been renovated more than once.

The sheer diversity of renovation activity makes it difficult to generalize about the forms and purposes of private-market renovations in Edmonton. At one extreme, there are houses that have experienced a single, minor, relatively inexpensive type of renovation; at the other extreme are houses so thoroughly transformed as to be unrecognizable. The mean increase in assessed replacement value for the 1,887 renovated houses was a modest 20 percent, but this mean conceals great variation in both relative and absolute increases (Table 4). The minimum absolute increase, for example, was a mere \$622, whereas the maximum was almost \$125,000. The same pattern was found in the value of building permits

TABLE 4

VALUE OF HOUSING RENOVATIONS 1971-1986

1. **Assessed Replacement Value of Dwellings (1985\$)**
 - a. **Assessed replacement value before renovations**
 - minimum = \$10,163
 - maximum = \$182,553
 - mean = \$39,937
 - median = \$37,769
 - b. **Assessed replacement value after renovations**
 - minimum = \$14,843
 - maximum = \$196,746
 - mean = \$47,464
 - median = \$43,353
 - c. **Change in assessed replacement value due to renovations**
 - minimum = \$622
 - maximum = \$124,456
 - mean = \$7,598
 - median = \$3,865
 - d. **Change in replacement value as a percentage of original value**
 - minimum = 0.78%
 - maximum = 223%
 - mean = 19.77%
 - median = 10.39%
2. **Estimated Value of Renovations from Building Permits (not adjusted for base year)**
 - minimum = \$100
 - maximum = \$113,000
 - mean = \$11,575
 - median = \$6,450

N.B.: Building permits were issued for only 69.3 percent of the renovated buildings.

in those cases where permits were issued. The lowest permit value was \$100; the highest, \$113,000.

The only possible conclusion is that housing renovations in Edmonton have been extremely varied—in type, in scope, and in value. At the same time, we can see from Table 4 that the median values of the renovations are consistently much lower than the means, however renovation value is measured. The obvious implication is that most of Edmonton's housing renovations have been comparatively minor and inexpensive, and so have brought only modest improvements in quality or value. This suggested the desirability of focusing the analysis on large-scale renovations, to provide more telling evidence of the effect of private-market renovation activity on the physical character of the study area. If there really is a process of physical upgrading going on in any part of Edmonton's inner city, it will be most clearly revealed by those renovations that result in substantial changes to the overall condition and character of the affected houses.

For operational purposes, large-scale renovations were defined as those with an assessed replacement value of \$7,000 or more. This was based on the value given by the Assessment Manual for a "basic" addition (that is, an addition with no special features) of about 25 m² to a house of fair-to-good construction quality, which is what the assessors now regard as the "average" quality of construction. By this criterion, slightly less than one third of the renovated dwellings, or 4 percent of all the houses in the study area, experienced large-scale renovation between 1971 and 1986. In virtually all cases, the houses had been enlarged (Table 5), although it was common, even normal, for other types of renovations to be combined with the space additions.

The general characteristics of the affected houses are summarized in Table 6. When these results are compared with Table 1, the only noteworthy point of difference is a slightly greater tendency for houses of good or fair-to-good construction quality to be selected for large-scale renovations. This is also reflected in a higher mean assessed replacement value before renovation—\$40,000 for all renovated dwellings and \$44,000 for large-scale renovations.

THE LOCATION OF PRIVATE-MARKET RENOVATIONS

The extent to which Edmonton's housing stock has been renovated varies considerably within the study area (Figure 3). At one extreme, 52 of the enumeration areas included in the analysis proved to have no renovated dwellings at all, although that result is less significant than it might appear, because the non-renovated enumeration areas tend to have very few single-family houses. Their combined total is only 600, which is less than 4 percent of the total for the whole study area. The explanation is simple:

TABLE 5
LARGE-SCALE RENOVATION: TYPES OF RENOVATIONS COMPLETED

N = 579

Renovation type	Number of cases	Percentage of large-scale renovations
Enlarging house	540	93.3
Adding deck	301	60.0
Adding bathroom	226	39.0
Exterior renovation	222	38.3
Interior renovation	213	36.8
Adding fireplace	208	35.9
Upgrading heating, plumbing wiring and insulation	155	26.8
Finishing basement	101	17.4
Easement repair or construction	65	11.2
Sauna, whirlpool, hot tub or swimming pool	39	6.7
Historic restoration	2	0.3
Commercial conversion	1	0.2

N.B.: Houses may have undergone more than one type of renovation, so percentages do not add up to 100.

redevelopment. In fact, there is a close correspondence between non-renovation and the distribution of apartment redevelopment in 1971, as identified by McCann.⁸ It can thus be said that renovation activity since 1971 has generally avoided areas that had already been targeted for redevelopment. By and large, these lie in a zone immediately surrounding the central area of Edmonton, so renovation is most prevalent in the outer parts of the study area.

Figure 3 shows some isolated exceptions to this generalization, but they all relate to enumeration areas with only one or two renovated houses. If those insignificant cases are excluded, the highest concentration of renovated houses occurs in the clusters of enumeration areas flanking the river valley in the west end of the study area, in the communities of Windsor Park, between the university and the river, and Glenora, which lies beyond the apartment redevelopment zone to the west of the central area. Here are to be found the five most extensively renovated enumeration areas in Edmonton. In total, more than one quarter of their houses have been renovated, and they account for 17 percent of all the renovated dwellings in the study area.

Outside this node, there is no clear pattern to be observed from Figure 3. Areas of moderately extensive renovation (10.0-19.9%) are widely spread throughout the study area, although there is a tendency towards low levels of renovation in the northeastern quadrant, where the main concentration of RRAP areas also occurs. The Highlands district on the north bank of the river is excluded here, since it stands out as a distinct pocket of moderately extensive renovation.

The location pattern comes into sharper focus when we consider the value of renovations, as measured by the mean increase in assessed replacement value (Figure 4). If we exclude enumeration areas with only one or two renovated houses, where the means are biased by a single large renovation, a reasonably definite pattern emerges. The west end stands out, once again, as the most prominent location, with seven enumeration areas, containing almost 350 renovated houses, in which the mean replacement value increased by more than \$10,000. A secondary cluster, with somewhat lower means, is located in the vicinity of Mill Creek, south of the river, and a third, with still lower means, in the Highlands district. There is another pocket of high-value renovations in the north-central part of the study area, but the total number of renovated houses there is small.

Elsewhere, the typical pattern is one of small-scale renovation. Over most of the study area, taking in almost two thirds of the enumeration areas with renovated dwellings, the mean increase in assessed replacement value was below \$7,000; in almost 40 percent of cases it was below \$5,000. This extends the conclusion already drawn from Table 4; that is, small-scale renovations are not only common in Edmonton, they are the dominant form of renovation in most of the study area.

TABLE 6
CHARACTERISTICS OF DWELLINGS EXPERIENCING
LARGE-SCALE RENOVATION

N = 579

Type of house	Number of dwellings	Percentage
Bungalow	289	49.9
Semi-bungalow (1½ storey)	159	27.5
1¼ storey	19	3.3
2 or more storeys	94	16.2
Split-level	13	2.2
Duplex	5	0.7
Period of construction		
Prior to 1922	75	13.0
1922 to 1941	109	18.8
1942 to 1951	343	59.2
1952 to 1959	52	9.0
Quality of construction		
Poor	7	1.2
Poor-to-fair	88	15.2
Fair	337	58.2
Fair-to-good	121	20.9
Good	26	4.5

The corollary, of course, is that large-scale renovations will be spatially concentrated, a conclusion that is confirmed by Figure 5. Here, again, is displayed the pattern of one major area of renovation activity and two lesser concentrations. At the core of the western cluster are two enumeration areas in the communities of Glenora and Windsor Park, in which 20 percent of all the single-family houses, and almost two-thirds of the renovated houses, have undergone large-scale renovation. It is also evident that there has been a spread effect into the neighbouring communities of Groat Estate, Westmount and Capitol Hill, where there are nine enumeration areas in which between 5 and 15 percent of the houses had undergone large-scale renovation by the end of 1986. In the two secondary clusters of the Highlands and Mill Creek (which includes the community known as Scona East), the impact of large-scale renovations is clearly less, at this point, than in the west end. Still, Figure 5 at least suggests that these are areas where housing renovations have started to yield visible improvements in the quality of the residential environment.

GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS IN LARGE-SCALE RENOVATION

The final questions to be considered are the geographical ones: why these areas? What special characteristics do they have that cause them to be selected as prime locations for housing renovation? At this stage, our conclusions are somewhat impressionistic, but it is not difficult to pick out the factors that are likely to be most important. They are proximity to the central area and to other high-status employment nodes; proximity to natural amenities; and the social status of both the renovating areas and the renovators. Each will be discussed briefly in turn.

1. All three areas have reasonably good access to the central area of Edmonton, while the west end communities and Scona East also have good access to the university complex. Still, this is true of most of the study area, certainly as far as access to the city centre is concerned. It seems that proximity to the central area is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for housing renovation—at least in Edmonton. It must be combined with other factors for its effect to be felt.
2. The "other factor" that is most obvious from all the maps is the proximity of the renovating areas to the North Saskatchewan River. Several features come into play here: views of the valley and the city skyline; access to the valley with its many recreational facilities; and proximity to tributary ravines, which are naturally attractive and provide access into the river valley parkland system. The last feature seems to be especially important in the Scona East case, because of its proximity to the Mill Creek ravine.

3. The attraction between the river valley and residential development is by no means a new phenomenon. Edmonton's high-status communities have always been drawn to the valley system, particularly upstream from the city centre. The Glenora and Windsor Park districts, as the immediate cases in point, have long carried a special cachet, and they have maintained their reputations through all of Edmonton's recent growth and change.¹⁰ In 1981, for example, over 50 percent of their employed labour forces were working in professional, managerial and related occupations (Figure 6), whereas most of the inner city scored quite low on this variable. (Essentially the same pattern emerged when we mapped the percentage of population 15 years and older with a university degree, but that map has not been included here. When correlation coefficients were calculated, professional and related occupations showed a stronger association with renovation activity). This leads us to conclude that renovation in the west end communities is reinforcing their elite reputation and ensuring that it will persist for a long time to come. Yet that does not explain why these communities *need* to be renovated, a question to which we can suggest two answers. First, they are now the oldest surviving high-status communities in Edmonton, so it is reasonable to expect a certain amount of upgrading and modernization, just to keep houses at the top of the market. Second, as we pointed out earlier, these areas contain high proportions of comparatively modest houses, which have now become prime targets for large-scale renovation. In this respect, renovation is bringing the physical quality of the housing stock into a better match with the social reputation of the west end communities.

To a much lesser degree, the same tendencies are evident in the Highlands district. Like Glenora, the Highlands was promoted as an exclusive development before the First World War, although few prestige houses were built, and the area does not score high on indicators of social status (Figure 6). Still, it is physically attractive and has good amenities, so it is not surprising that it should be starting to draw large-scale renovation.

The last issue to be addressed is the possible relationship between physical upgrading and social upgrading, insofar as it can be inferred from the data presented here. In the case of Glenora and Windsor Park, it is clear that renovation is not a product of gentrification as defined above, but this is not necessarily true of other parts of the study area. At this stage, however, the best evidence of social change comes from Ley's comparative study of six Canadian cities. His general conclusion about Edmonton, with which we concur, is that gentrification was not strongly established in the period 1971-1981.¹¹ Nonetheless, two census tracts that scored in the highest quintiles of Ley's index of social change also stand out in the maps of renovation (Figure 7). One is the Westmount district, just northeast of Glenora; the other is Scona East. Both were developed initially as working-class communities, with houses

of generally fair construction quality; since 1971, both have experienced a variety of renovation activity, including large-scale renovation. The best explanation in the Westmount case seems to be its proximity to Glenora, combined with its accessibility to the central area by way of a commercial corridor (124th Street) that is beginning to attract specialty retailing and related services. Scona East seems to have a stronger connection with the university complex, as suggested by its higher level of professional and related employment (Figure 6), but the environmental amenities of Mill Creek and the river valley are probably the best explanation for its recent renovation.

CONCLUSION

To sum up our main conclusions, we have determined that private-market housing renovation is a widespread activity in Edmonton, although neither its frequency nor its scale is such as to have yet had a significant impact on the physical condition of most inner-city neighbourhoods. Nor is there much evidence that renovation is a function of gentrification, except perhaps in the two small areas of Westmount and Scona East, and even those districts have not yet been extensively renovated. By far the most extensive renovation activity, and the greatest concentration of large-scale renovations, has occurred in the west end of the study area, centred on Glenora and Windsor Park. Here, renovation has chiefly taken the form of the enlargement and modernization of comparatively modest houses in communities with long-established reputations as select places to live. It is also highly probable that the physical upgrading of these communities is associated with social upgrading (Figure 7), but not in the form of gentrification. Just as the physical changes are serving to enhance a reputation of residential quality that the communities have not fully deserved in the past, so there appears to be a population turnover which is consolidating their position as bastions of high social status in the inner city. Today, these communities rank among the most prestigious housing markets in Edmonton.

This interpretation also reinforces a warning that other Canadian geographers have made about the danger of overstating the importance of gentrification as a cause of residential change. Bourne, for instance, has argued that "the scale, impact, durability, and complexity of gentrification have been seriously exaggerated."¹² There are some celebrated instances of social upgrading of low-cost housing areas, such as Don Vale in Toronto¹³ and Kitsilano in Vancouver,¹⁴ but their very celebrity draws attention away from other processes of change that are proceeding more quietly. As Millward and Davis have observed, the recent literature on residential change leaves the impression "that almost all private rehabilitation in the inner-city is due to gentrification."¹⁵ They found that Halifax does not fit that pattern; neither, at this point, does Edmonton. Indeed, Edmonton is an even worse fit than Halifax. At least in

the Halifax case, gentrification accounted for roughly half of the observed renovation; the proportion in Edmonton is much less. Private-market housing renovation in Edmonton is most strikingly associated with the physical and social upgrading of established high-status communities, not deteriorated ones.

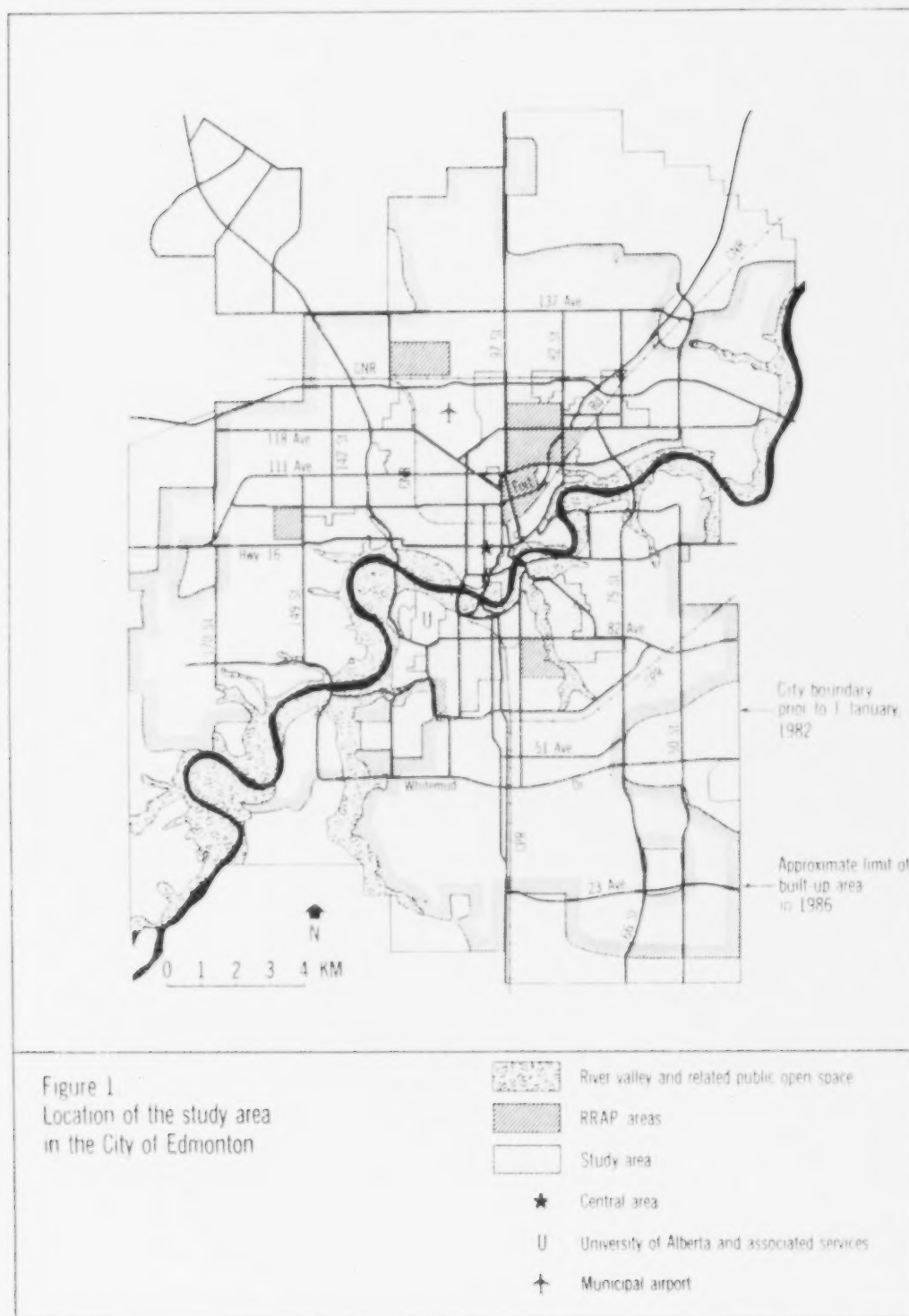
NOTES

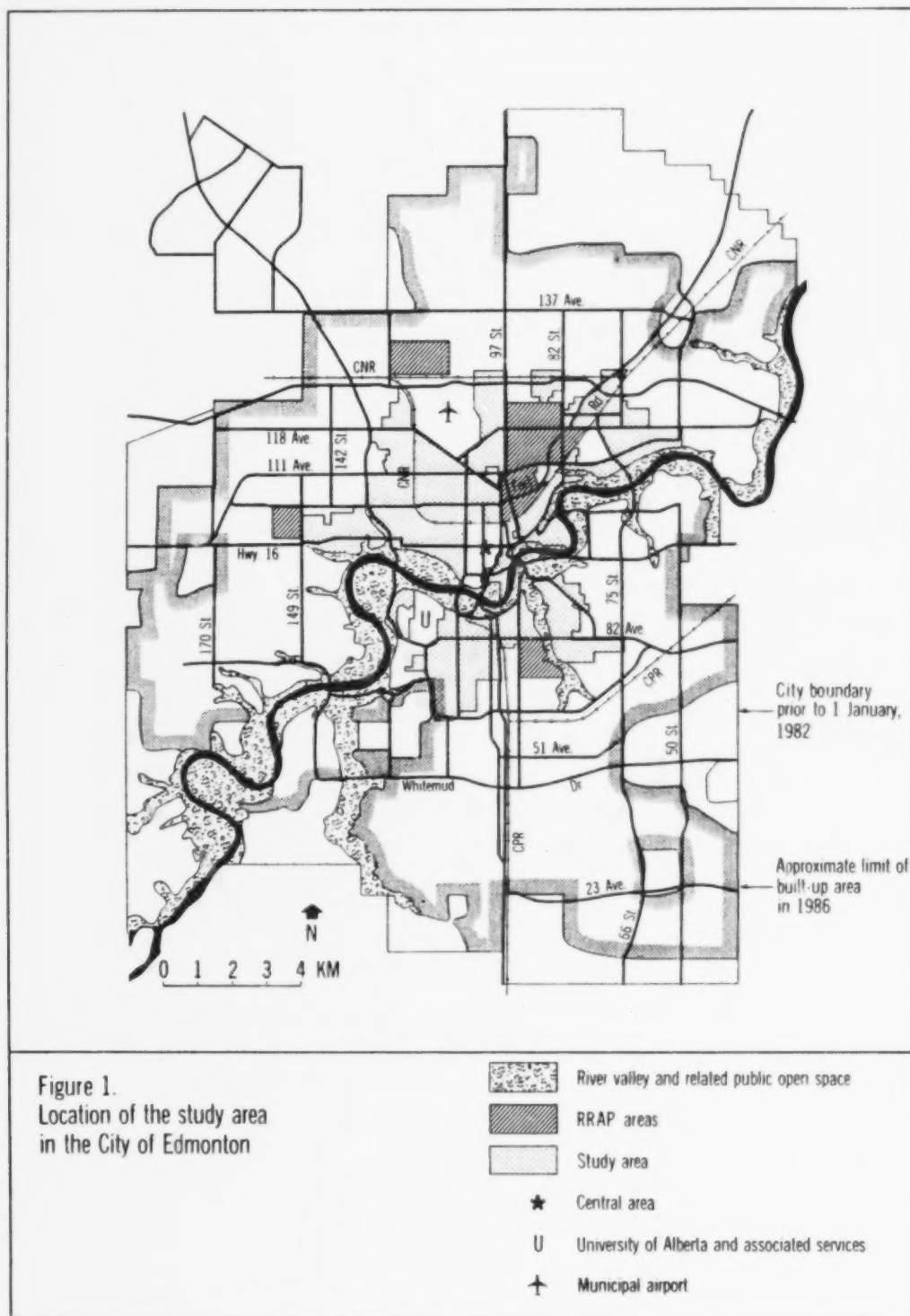
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2. Ibid.
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APPENDIX

FIGURES 1-7





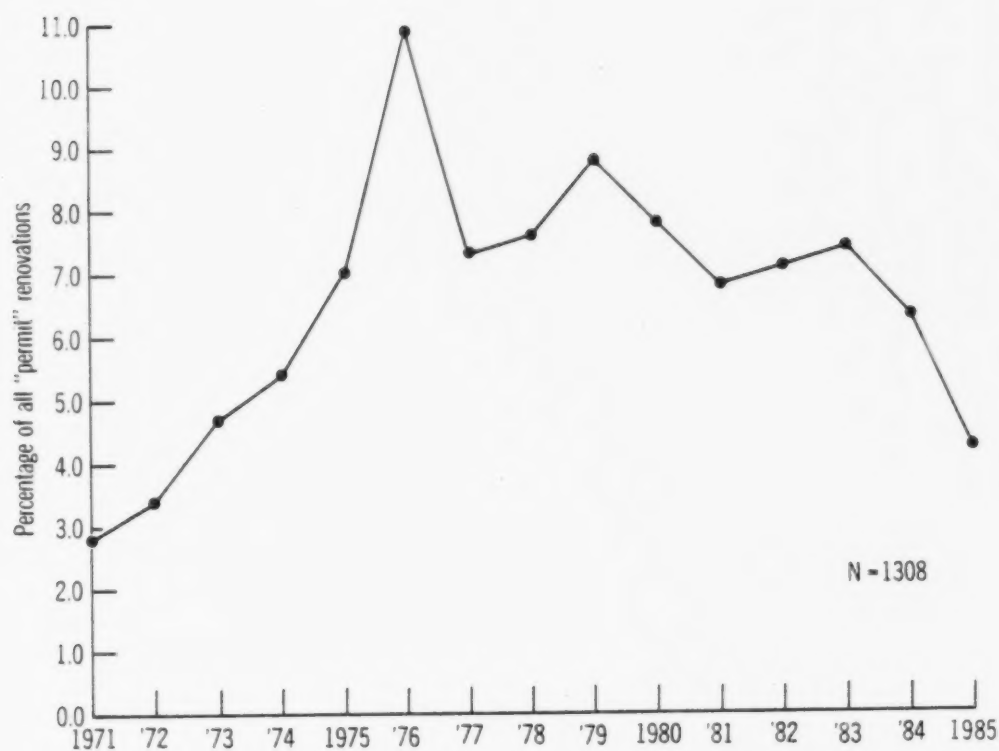
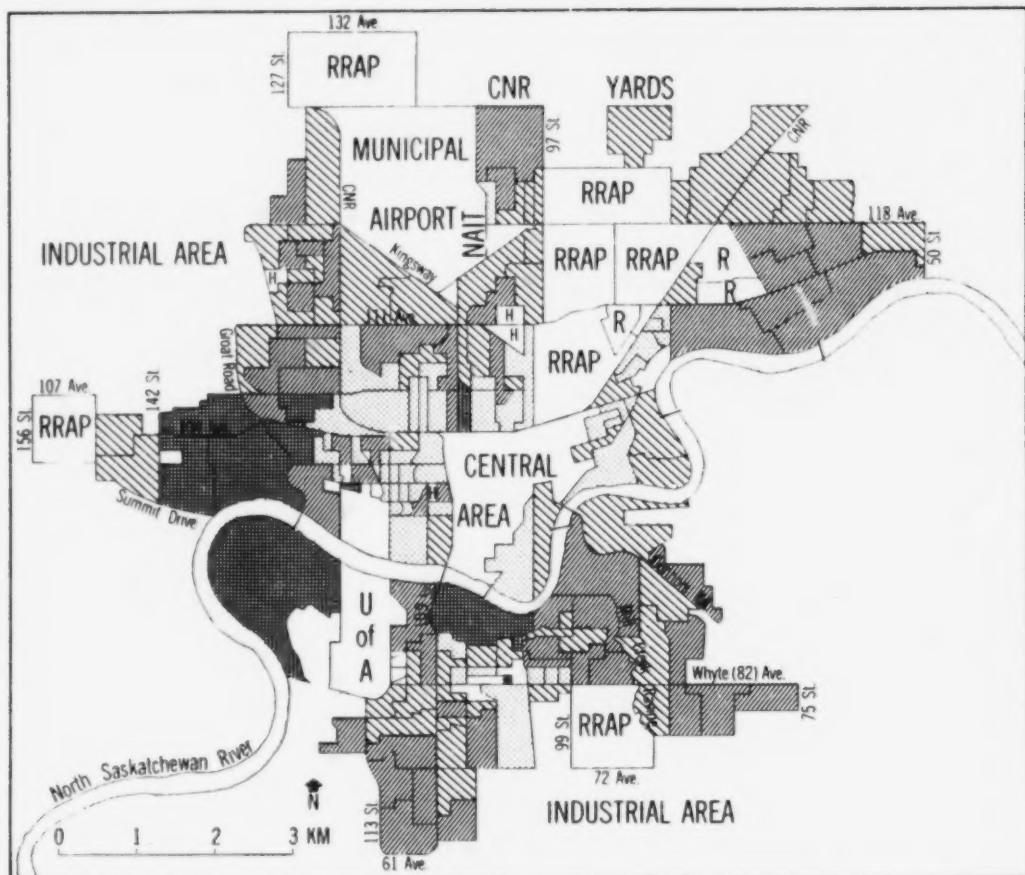


Figure 2. Annual percentage frequency of renovations for which building permits were issued, 1971-1985.

(N.B. Renovations cannot be dated accurately from assessment records, so building permit data were used for this graph, although permits were issued for only 70 per cent of the known renovations.)



RRAP Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program plan area

H Major hospital, excluding University of Alberta hospital

R Major recreational use

* Old Strathcona commercial centre

Unidentified areas: No single family dwellings

NAIT Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
CNR Canadian National Railways
U of A University of Alberta

Percentage of dwellings renovated

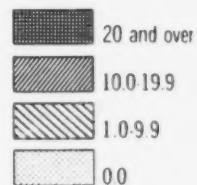
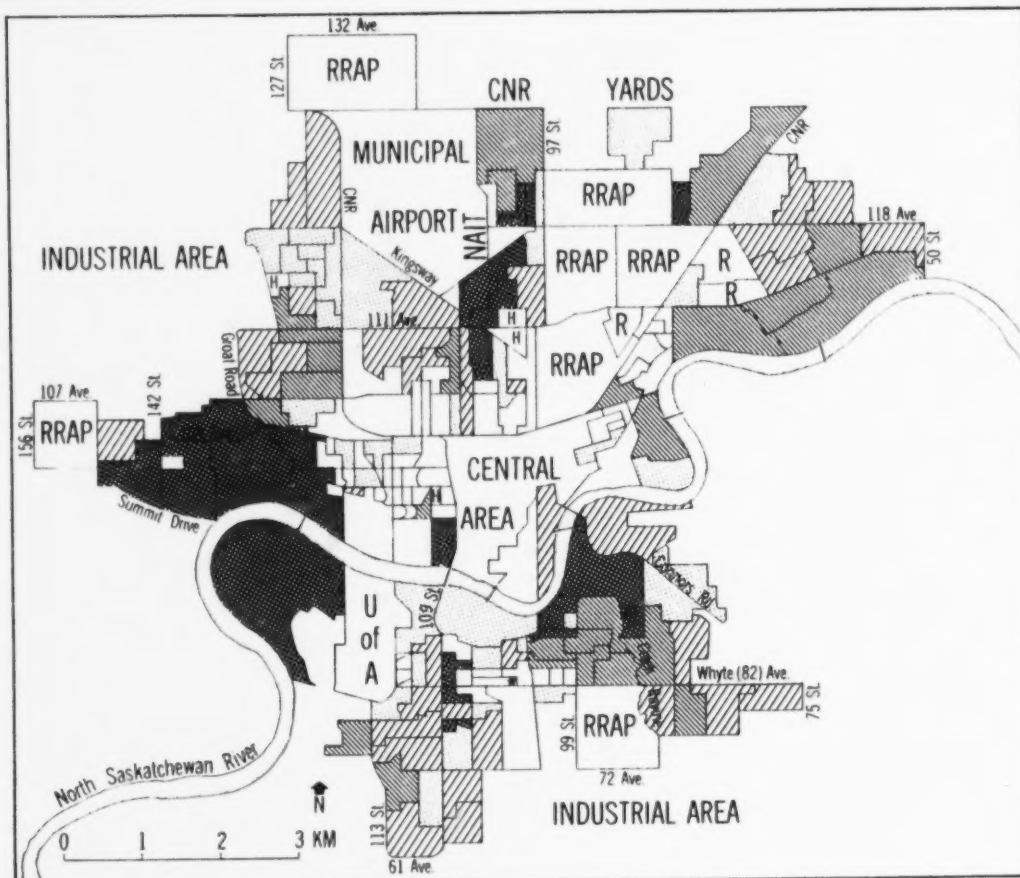


Figure 3.
Percentage of dwellings renovated by
enumeration area, 1971-1986.

Source: City of Edmonton, Office of the City Assessor, 1986



RRAP Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program plan area

H Major hospital, excluding University of Alberta hospital

R Major recreational use

* Old Strathcona commercial centre

Unidentified areas: No single family dwellings
and no renovated dwellings

NAIT Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
CNR Canadian National Railways
U of A University of Alberta

Average assessed replacement value
of renovations (\$1985)

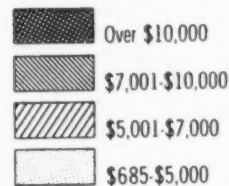
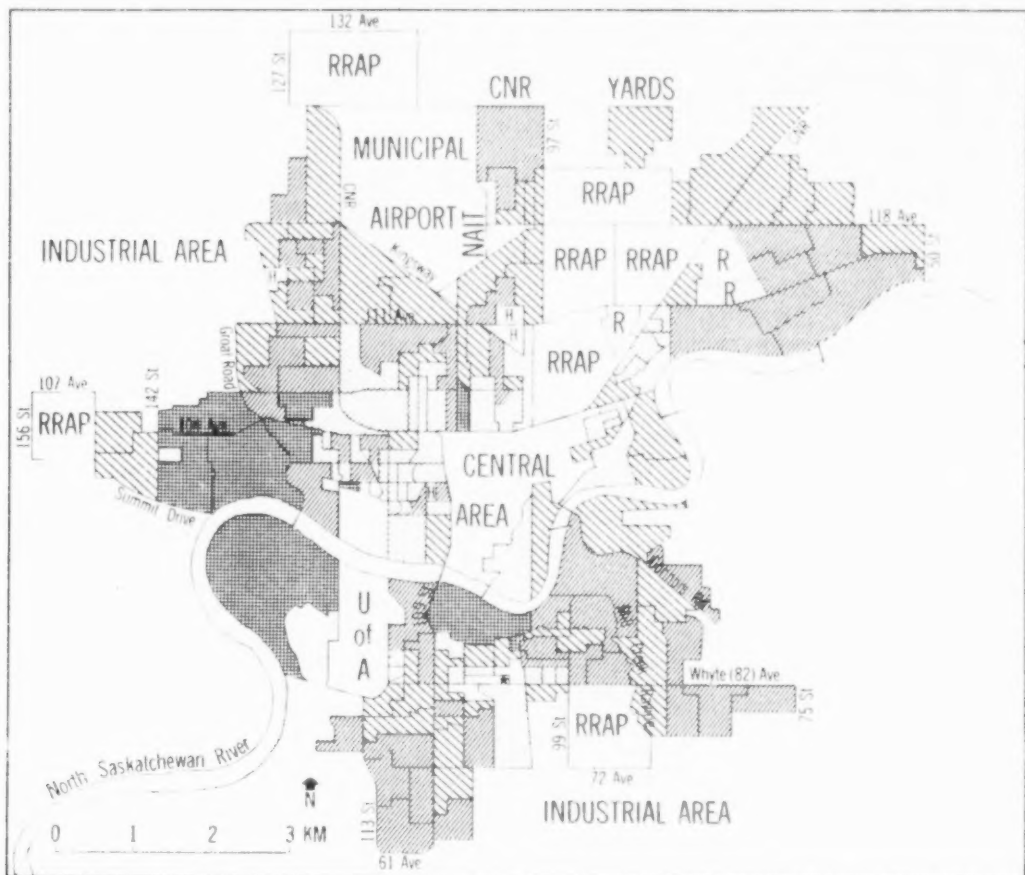


Figure 4.
Average increase in assessed replacement
value for all renovated dwellings
by enumeration area, 1971-1986.

Source: City of Edmonton, Office of the City Assessor, 1986



RRAP Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program plan area
 H Major hospital, excluding University of Alberta hospital
 R Major recreational use
 * Old Strathcona commercial centre
 Unidentified areas. No single family dwellings

NAIT Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
 CNR Canadian National Railway
 U of A University of Alberta

Percentage of dwellings renovated

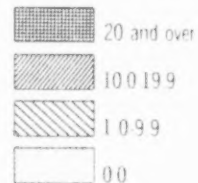
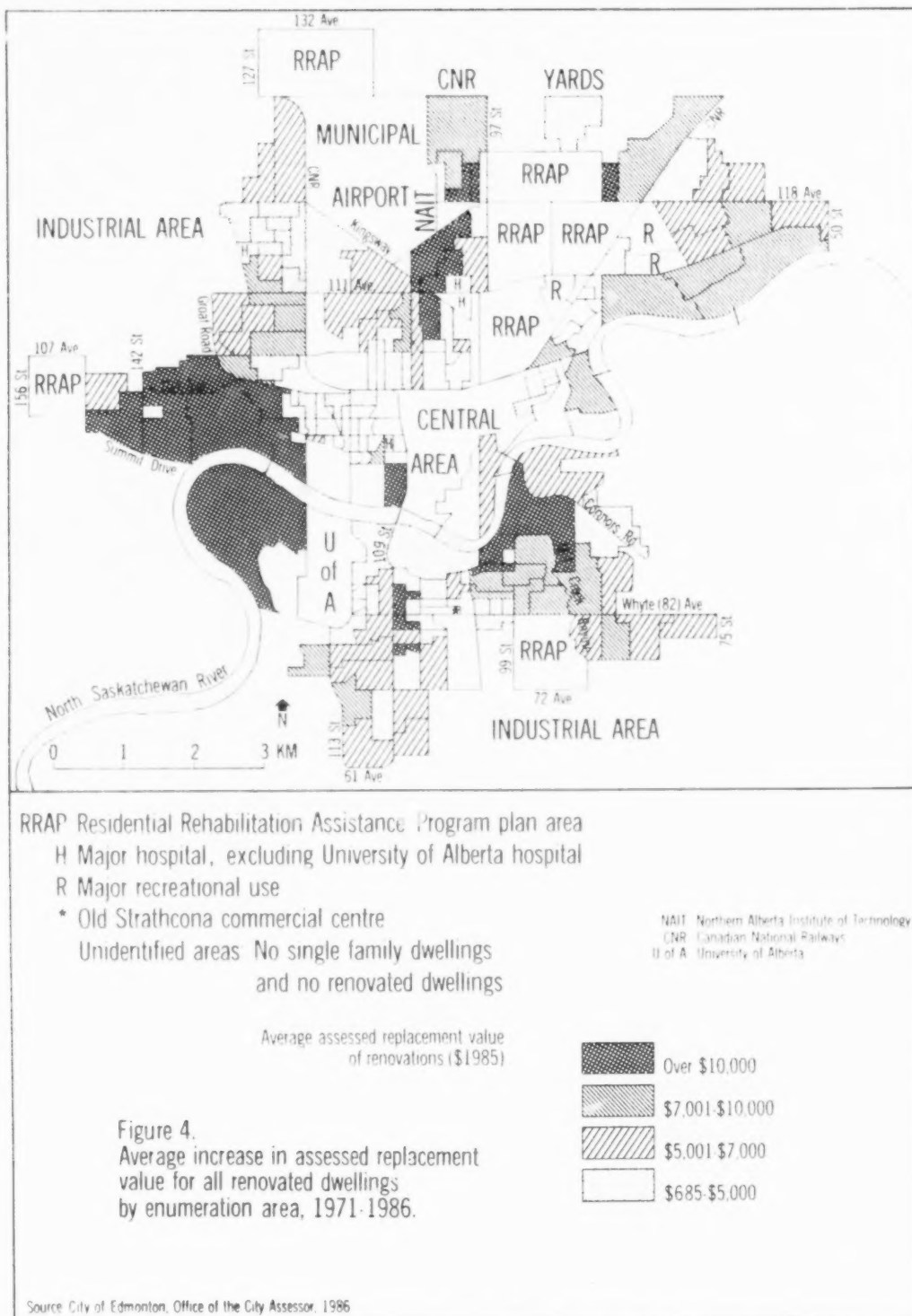
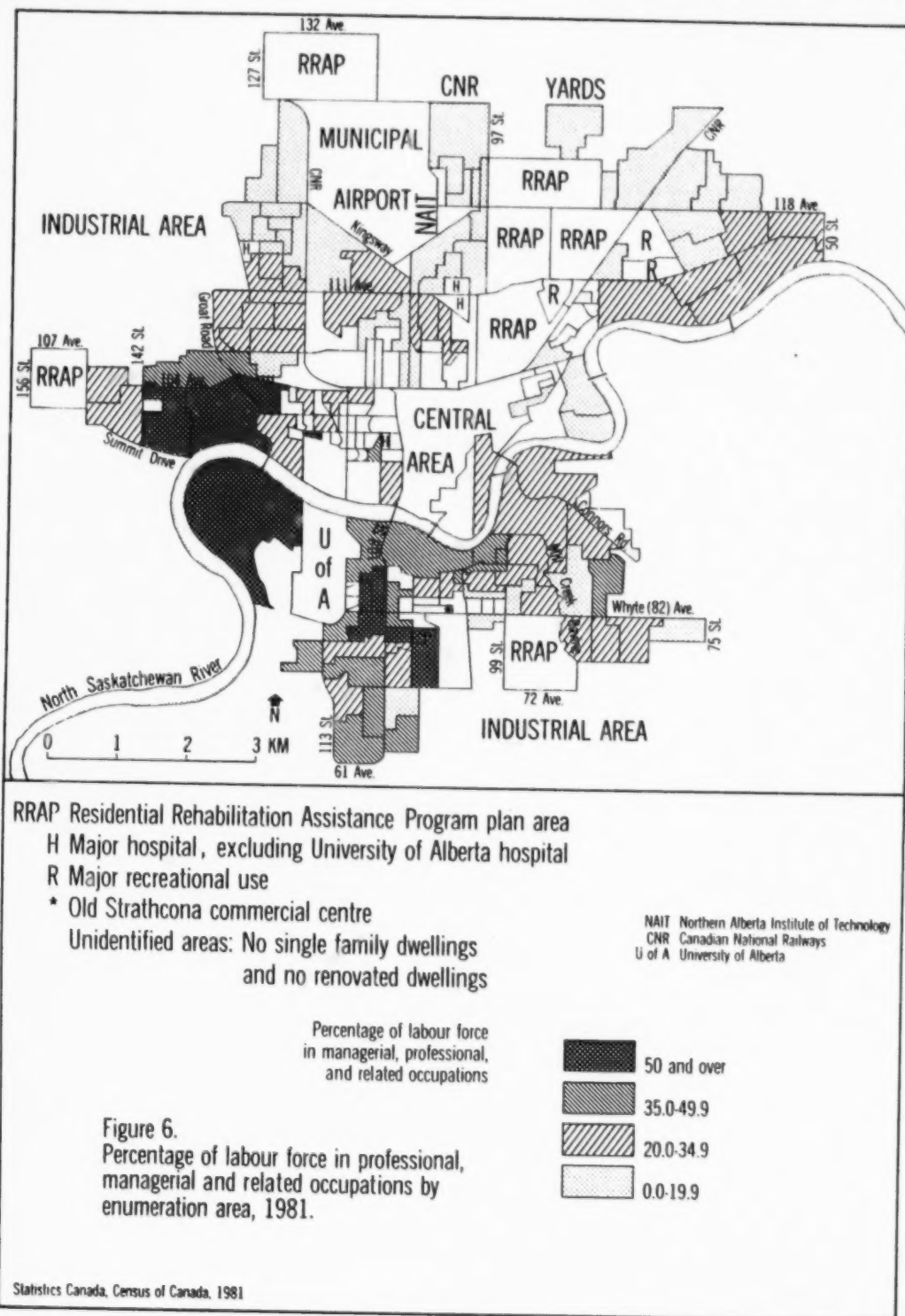


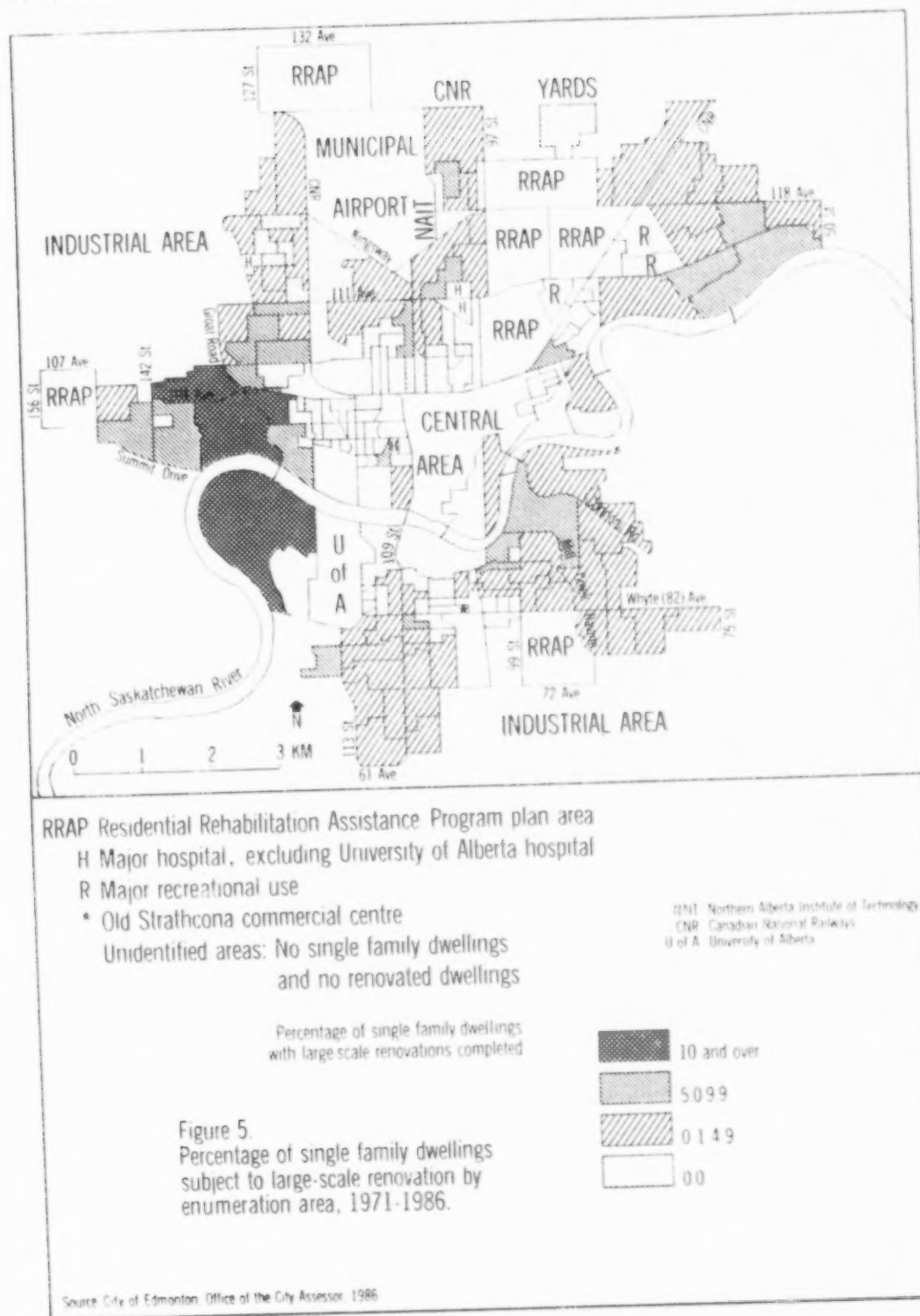
Figure 3.
 Percentage of dwellings renovated by
 enumeration area, 1971-1986.

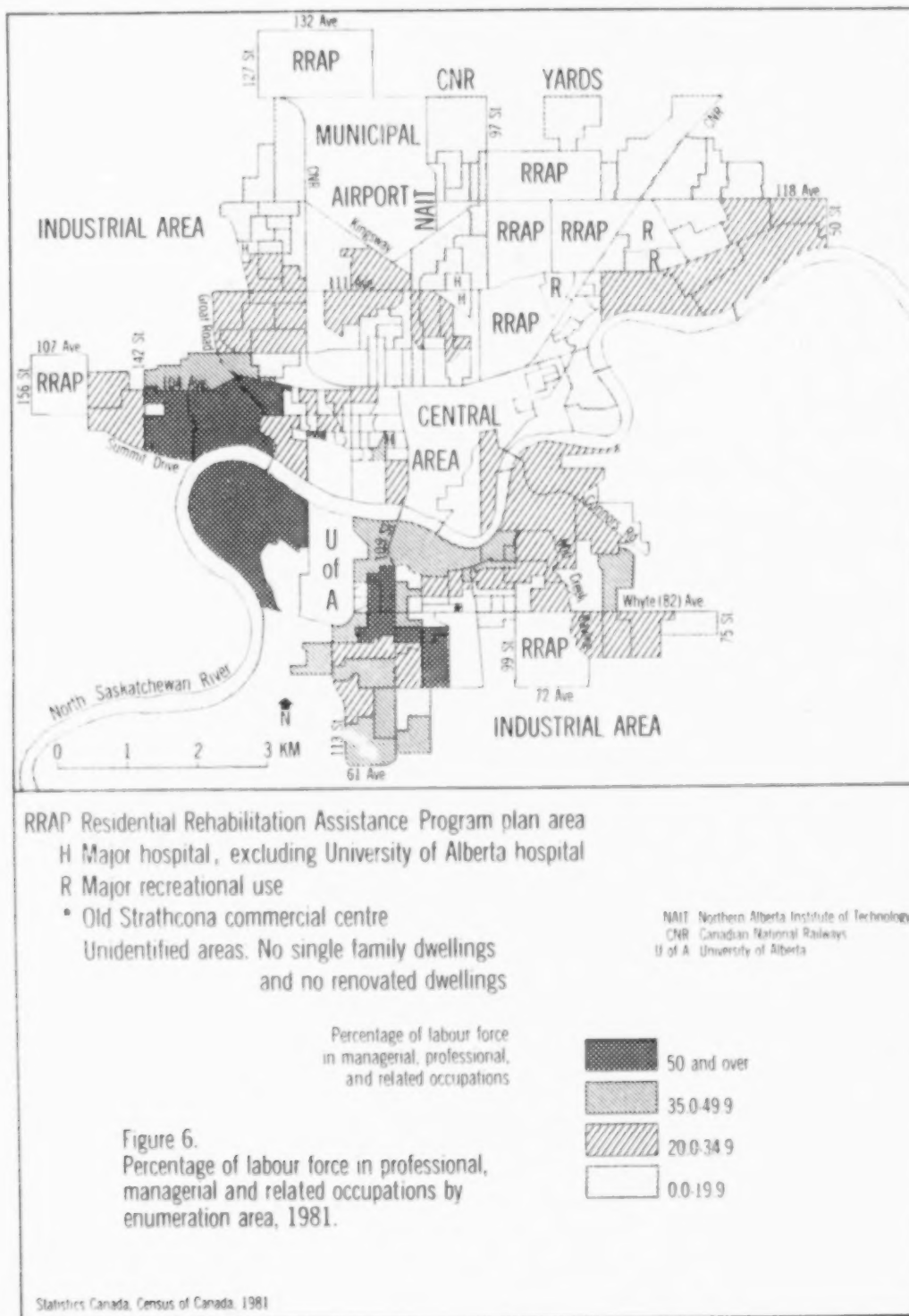
Source: City of Edmonton, Office of the City Assessor, 1986

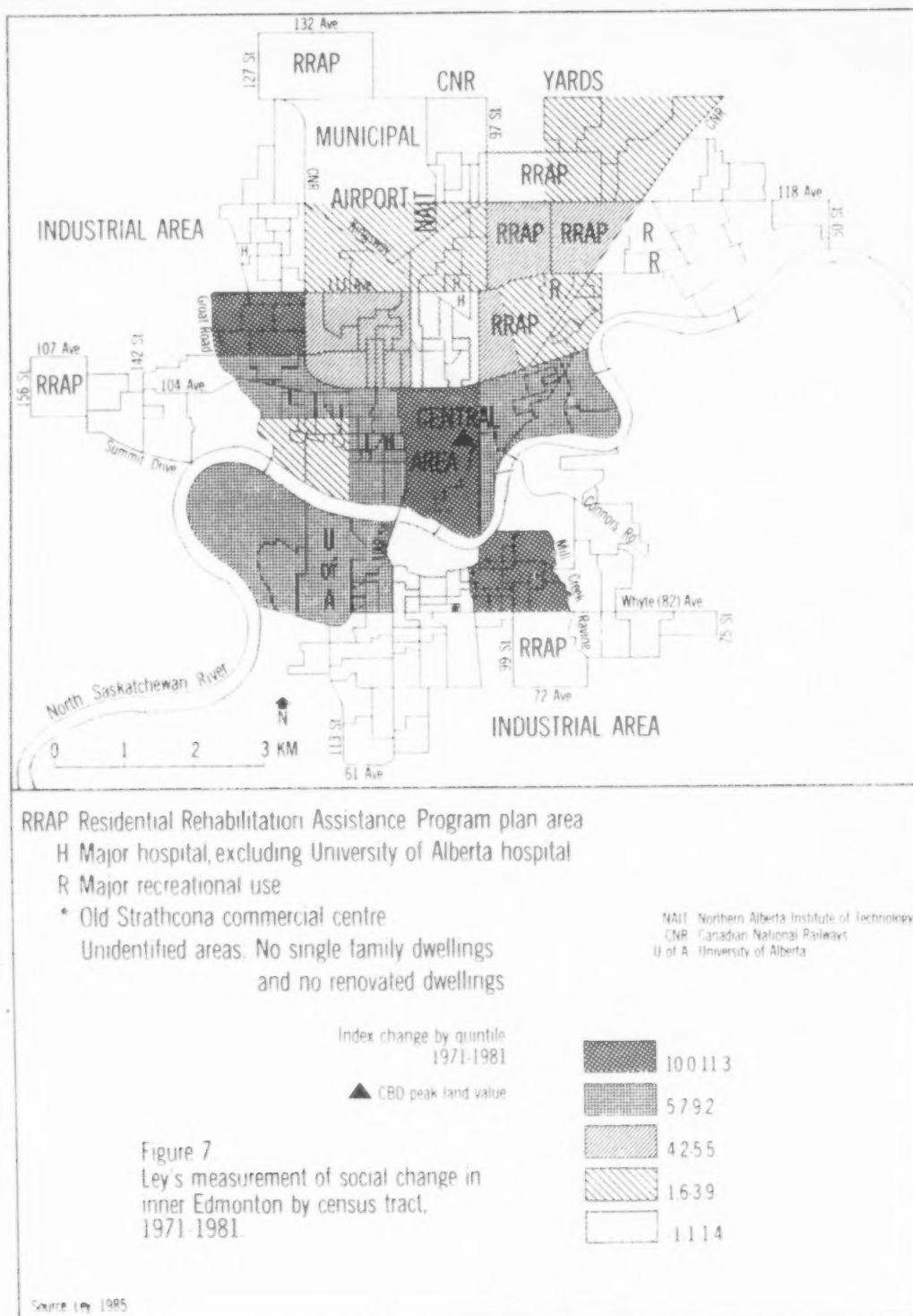


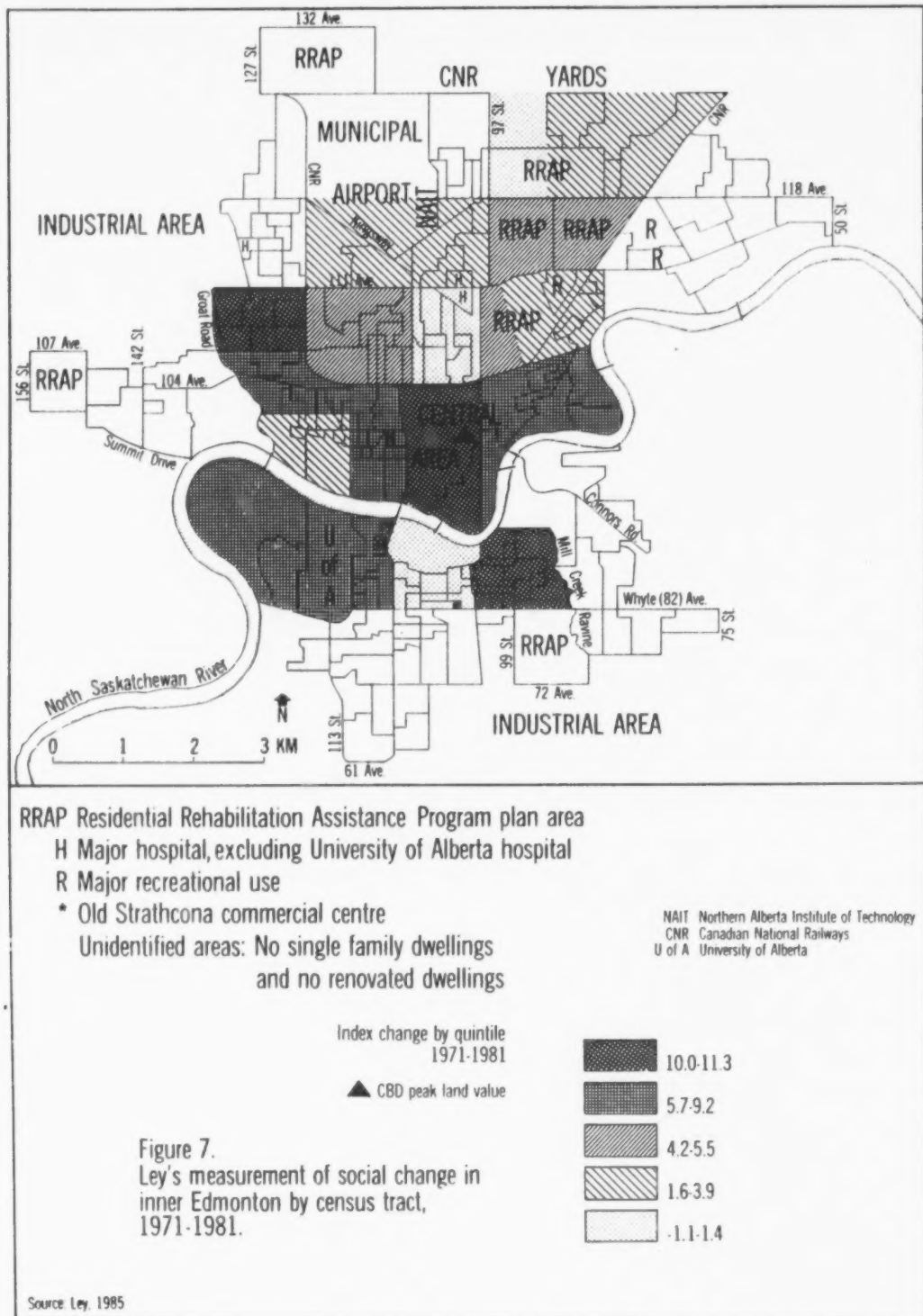












Source: Ley, 1985



